Dudley
CHRONICLE

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20mph zones among measures to boost safety

SPEED LIMIT TO PROTECT PUPILS

Report By Dayna Farrington

NEW 20mph speed limits are set to be rolled out across Dudley borough under plans to improve safety outside of schools.

The new zones will be introduced at 11 schools in Dudley, Sedgley, Stourbridge, Brierley Hill and Halesowen, if the plans are backed by council bosses.

It could also see other traffic management schemes introduced, including new zebra crossings and widened pavements.

Dudley Council's cabinet member for environmental services, Councillor Karen Shakespeare, said the speed limits were part of a programme to improve safety.

Cllr Karen Shakespeare

The 20mph would only operate during school drop-off and pick-up times. They are set to be introduced outside Halesbury School, Hurst Green Primary, Ham Dingle Primary, Fairhaven Primary, Peters Hill Primary, Cotwall End Primary, Colley Lane Primary, Earls High, Tenterfields Primary, Bishop Milner Catholic High, St Joseph's RC Primary and Leasowes Community College.

Programme

Councillor Shakespeare said : "As part of our programme to improve safety on our streets, the 20mph zones are among a number of measures being introduced outside school gates.

"All schools across the borough have been assessed and work prioritised. Residents will be consulted on our proposals and the council will work to introduce the schemes as quickly as possible."

The proposed programmes include specific provisions to benefit pedestrians and the mobility of the less able, as well as measures to improve access for young people to schools.

TRIBUTE TO WOMEN WHO STARTED CHAIN REACTION

Rousing the 'women slaves of the forge', Mary Macarthur's address to the strikers is recreated as part of the Women Chainmakers' Festival

ACTORS took visitors back in time to a historic struggle fought by women in the Black Country for a minimum wage.

The scene in Cradley Heath High Street was turned back to 1910 when actors dressed in Edwardian clothes and carrying protest signs at the Women Chainmakers' Festival on Saturday recreated one of the meetings when the women were addressed by firebrand Scottish Suffragist campaigner and trade unionist Mary Macarthur .

The family friendly festival organised by the Midlands TUC celebrated the role of the women in struggling for a decent wage, marking a key moment in women's and Labour history.

The group stood up for their right to earn a living wage led by the founder of the National Federation of Women Workers, Mary Macarthur. Their 10-week strike successfully established the right to a minimum wage.

Families enjoyed market stalls, fun fair rides, speeches, street theatre, music and debate at the festival.

There was also a trade union banner parade. The event was held as part of the Black Country Festival.

POLICE

Bus cleared due to fear of explosion

PASSENGERS travelling on a bus in Dudley were forced to get off after concerns there could be an explosive on board.

Police received a 999 call on Saturday morning from a staff member at Dudley bus station in Fisher Street. A driver had raised concerns about a man who boarded a bus that morning in Lye Cross.

The bus was evacuated and checked by a police sniffer dog but nothing suspicious was detected.

It is understood that the man in question had got off the bus before police were contacted.

EVENTS

Wiggle over for fun in town centre

CELEBRATIONS for Black Country Day take place in Dudley town centre on Saturday. There will be a family fun day with the revival of the traditional coffin race, which refers to an historic incident at Dudley Castle, and an appearance by Britain's Got Talent 'Wiggle Wine' singer Donchez Dacres. It's the same day as Wordsley Festival, plus events in Shell Corner and Old Hill.

● **Black Country Festival – page 2**

ANNIVERSARY

Ensign flies to mark the RAF centenary

THE Royal Air Force Ensign is flying from Dudley Castle and the Council House and will do so for one hundred days to mark this week's 100th birthday of the RAF.

On September 16 Mayor of Dudley Councillor Alan Taylor will be giving the RAF the Freedom of the Borough. The Royal Air Force Association with Dudley Council will hold a Battle of Britain service at St Thomas and St Luke's Church (Top Church) followed by a parade through the town centre and the laying of wreaths at the cenotaph in Ednam Road.

INSIDE

IN THE PINK AT RACE FOR LIFE

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'Greedy' cleaner fails over jail appeal

Veronica Susan Robinson

A CROOKED cleaner who took advantage of a 93-year-old war veteran, plundering 'hundreds of thousands of pounds" from his bank account, has been told her jail term is not a day too long.

'Insatiably greedy' Veronica Susan Robinson, 62, began cleaning the house of a blind Second World War veteran in 2013, tLondon's Appeal Court heard.

She 'excluded' his family and neighbours, who had previously helped care for him at his home in Halesowen. Then, after 'grooming' her wealthy victim, she manipulated him into paying for a £190,000 house for her and went on to further raid his bank account.

She then falsified a document put before a court, in a bid to cover her tracks after her fraud was discovered.

Robinson, whose address was given as High Haden Road, Cradley Heath, was convicted of fraud and perverting the course of justice and she was locked up for five-and-a-half years at Wolverhampton Crown Court in March last year.

This week at London's Appeal Court, she asked Mr Justice Green to cut her jail term, claiming she was treated too harshly. But the judge refused her application, saying she had abused a vulnerable mam.

Justice Green said: "She isolated him from neighbours and relatives and began drawing out money, much of which was transferred into her pocket. She took advantage of her good fortune in meeting a wealthy but vulnerable man. She had no intention of protecting him. The intention was to abuse her self-appointed carer's position to swindle him out of his life savings. She was an unprincipled opportunist, motivated by insatiable greed."

Council in balance after Tory defects to Labour

THE leadership of Dudley Council hangs in the balance after a Conservative councillor defected to the opposition.

Norton Councillor Mike Attwood made the decision to switch to the Labour group at a meeting last Thursday and his change in allegiance has led to a power battle at the local authority.

The move means the Labour group holds the majority with 36 councillors compared to the Tories' 35 councillors and one independent.

Conservative council leader Patrick Harley called Councillor Attwood's decision 'disgraceful' and said a by-election should be held.

Labour leader Pete Lowe said his party would be submitting a motion of no confidence at October's full council meeting. For now, the council will go on its summer recess.

Cllr Attwood

Councillor Attwood said: "Conservative-run Dudley Council is doing nothing to stand up for the people I represent.

"I have been left bitterly disappointed in equal measure by the untenable plan and poor decisions Councillor Harley and his team have made in Dudley.

Reject

"I felt my colleagues were not supporting my work and my role, so I made the difficult decision to switch. I will carry on working with my constituents and I see no reason why I should not continue to do that. I reject his statement for a by-election."

Councillor Harley said: "What he has done is disgraceful. If he had any decency he would call a by-election and stand for election under his new party.

"We are still confident of making more gains. Labour have been in decline in the area. I think it will all end in tears."

Peaky Climbers hit heights for charity

The Peaky Climbers from Higgs & Sons complete their challenge on Snowdon in North Wales

A TEAM from a Black Country law firm scaled Britain's highest peaks in just 24 hours as part of a gruelling charity challenge.

Ten colleagues from Brierley Hill-based Higgs & Sons, who called themselves the Peaky Climbers, reached the top of the highest peaks in England, Scotland and Wales – Scafell Pike, Ben Nevis and Snowdon – on Friday and Saturday. The climb was in aid of Dudley Mind, the firm's charity of the year, and around £3,500 has been raised.

Higgs & Sons said on the firm's Twitter account: "They did it! Snowdon assailed, and back down within the 24 hours! #proud"

The intrepid group of legal professionals taking on the National Three Peaks Challenge were also sponsored by Sadler's Brewery in Lye, who produces Peaky Blinder Ale. The group trained on the Malvern Hills.

See https://localgiving.org/fundraising/peakyclimbers/ to donate.

Sunshine and footy keep carnival spirit going

THOUSANDS turned out to bask in summer sunshine at carnivals in Stourbridge and Halesowen over the weekend.

Fun fairs, parades, dancing and live music, wrestling, wild bird displays and a street market were just some of the attractions on offer, though thousands made sure they were near a TV screen for Saturday afternoon's England v Sweden match.

Halesowen Carnival took place at Highfields Park on Saturday, with Stourbridge Carnival in the High Street and town centre on Sunday. Both were part of the month-long Black Country Festival, with many more events taking place throughout July.

Mayor of Dudley Councillor Alan Taylor said: "Both carnivals were absolutely fantastic events. It was lovely to see so many families out enjoying the sunshine. The organisers did a brilliant job in both Stourbridge and Halesowen. I'm really looking forward to seeing the festivities continue throughout the month, and am particularly looking forward to the celebrations in Dudley town centre on Black Country Day itself on Saturday."

Running to July 29, the Black Country Festival, now in its fifth year, promises to be the biggest and best yet. From 10am to 5pm, the family fun day in Dudley will focus on Stone Street Square.

Inca is bear-ing up very well at 38

DUDLEY Zoo's black bear Inca – thought to be the oldest in the world – is doing un-bear-lievably well after sailing through her annual health check.

As the oldest Asiatic black bear on zoo records worldwide, at the age of 38, astounding Inca underwent her yearly medical with zoo vets Peter Stewart and Cristian Segura Cortijos a couple of weeks ago and her results have come back clear.

Curator Richard Brown, who assisted the vets, said: "Inca is doing incredibly well for an old girl and has exceeded the life span of a wild Asiatic black bear by well over a decade."

Inca goes into semi-hibernation, in her den between around November and March but has been known to make an appearance on a mild winter's day.

Controversial comic

CONTROVERSIAL comedian Jim Davidson is to perform in Dudley this winter. His On The Road Again tour comes to Dudley Town Hall on November 10.

Tickets costing £23 are on sale now from the box office on (01384) 812812.

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Fresh doubt over store at Merry Hill centre

FRESH doubt has been cast over the future of a Mothercare store at the Merry Hill shopping centre.

It is part of a Mothercare subsidiary called Children's World, made up of 22 stores which the company has now put into administration as part of its radical bail-out plan.

It aims to close nine of the shops but refuses to say which are affected.

The move now means a total of 60 Mothercare outlets will be shut by June next year, putting 900 jobs at risk. That already includes stores in Stafford and Walsall, where around 30 people work.

The retailer said 13 of the Children's World 22 stores, which all together employ 336 people, would be saved. It is thought the nine closures will add around 100 to the jobs toll.

Mothercare bought Children's World from Boots in January 1996 and re-branded all of its superstores as Mothercare World, including the outlet at the Merry Hill retail park, off Pedmore Road, Brierley Hill.

The changes come after Mothercare cleared a restructuring plan known as a Company Voluntary Agreement, an insolvency procedure that required the approval of the retailer's landlords.

The group has also managed to raise £32.5 million from its existing shareholders.

Quad bike rider rescued after fall

A QUAD biker rider aged in his 60s suffered serious injuries after falling 20ft down a steep embankment in Rowley Regis.

The man was found on land off Moor Lane, near Rowley Regis Hospital. on Thursday afternoon. Specialist paramedics and the Midlands Air Ambulance was called to the scene at around 4.50pm.

West Midlands Ambulance Service spokeswoman Claire Brown said: the man had sustained potentially serious injuries and due to his precarious position on the steep slope had to be placed on a specialist stretcher.

He was lifted up the slope using ropes with the support of firefighters and taken to Birmingham's Queen Elizabeth Hospital for treatment.

St John base shuts

THE St John Ambulance centre in Brierley Hill has closed after 125 years with members holding a farewell event at the Bent Street base. The centre was closed following a property review by the organisation.

200 jobs face axe at shop fitting firm

MORE than 200 jobs at one of the Black Country's biggest firms are to be axed as the business suffers from the impact of online shopping on traditional retail.

Shop fittings specialists The Alan Nuttall Partnership view the move – the second round of redundancies it has made in four months – as necessary to secure the firm's future.

Chairman Alan Nuttall said he was 'devastated' at taking the action, which was aimed at refocusing on the profitable parts of the business.

The redundancies will be spread across the company's two sites – at Hall Street, Dudley, and Hinckley in Leicestershire. The company employs more than 500 people.

Employees were told in personal emails to staff on Friday.

One Dudley worker who asked not to be named said: "Some people have spent all their lives at the company after starting there as apprentices. It's heartbreaking.

"Nuttalls was such a big employer. I don't think people understand the implications of this."

Clients

The company produces interiors and display units, from design through to manufacture and installation, for clients such as M&S, Morrisons, Asda, Homebase, Costa, Nike, Sainsbury's and Dunkin Donuts.

In his letter, the chairman said the business as a whole had made 'considerable losses' over the past two years which it could not continue to sustain.

It comes after axing 84 jobs earlier this year.

Managing director Nino Calandra said: "We have invested time and resource to try and move into new sectors to reduce our dependence on the retail sector but sadly this doesn't happen overnight, although we hope we will see the benefits of these actions in the near future."

He described the growth of online shopping as seemingly 'virtually unstoppable'.

Mr Calandra added: "Sadly we have no option. We need to do this to live to fight another day."

Park turned pink as runners raise £123k

IT was a sea of pink as more than 1,700 people gathered at Himley Park to race in aid of charity, raising more than £123,000 for Cancer Research UK in the Race For Life event on Sunday.

Many of those tackling the course were out to remember lost loved ones – including Diane Greaves, 54, from Stafford, who was taking part in memory of her late mother Cilla Ingham who died in 2003, aged 67, from cancer.

Diane said: "Fifteen years ago today my mom passed away, she had pancreatic cancer. My sister and my brother are here, my daughters are here and my nieces, my sister-in-law, we just want to give something back, we want to fight and we want to kick cancer's butt.

"We do this today, Pretty Muddy next week and we volunteer. We have called this Granny's Gang and everyone has done an individual bit to raise some money.

Cure

"Fifteen years ago there wasn't the same drugs around as there are today, more people are actually living and fighting cancer today and lets hope in another fifteen years they can even more. That is what it is about. The more people give, the quicker we will find a cure."

There was an overspill of joy from England's triumph over Sweden on Saturday too as Heart FM's Ed James roused the crowd during their warm up with classic Three Lions song, which features the Black Country's Frank Skinner.

Event manager Kirsten Greaves labelled the Dudley fundraisers 'incredible' and said: "It is absolutely amazing. The people of Dudley are just incredible, they do so much fundraising, they go that extra mile and its vital for research.

"There is something really special about Race For Life. When you see everyone's signs and the messages to their loved ones – not one person here hasn't been touched by cancer. They have lost loved ones, family, friends, colleagues and it is the most special, overwhelming feeling and you cannot help but be touched. Last year in the Midlands we spent £11 million on research and we simply could not do that without the support."

The pink army warm up for the 5k Race For Life fundraiser in the grounds of Himley Hall, near Dudley

A team from the intu Merry Hill shopping centre

Lucy Baker, aged eight, from Netherton, took part

NEWS IN BRIEF

Pair sought after screws scattered

POLICE are appealing for help in identifying these two people they want to speak with in connection with screws being scattered on car parks in Stourbridge.

Dudley Police issued the image of a man and a woman they think might have information in relation to the incidents in which screws have been left on car parks around Mary Stevens Park, posing a potential hazard for motorists.

A spokesman for the force said: "There have been a number of occasions over recent weeks when screws have been scattered and damage has been caused to cars belonging to staff and visitors at the park. We think they may be able to help us understand why screws have been strewn around the car parks."

Call West Midlands Police on 101, quoting incident number 769 of June 8.

Industrial estate sells for £2.6m

A MULTI-LET industrial estate in Dudley has been sold for more than £2.6 million.

Joint agents Harris Lamb and McLaren Partners, acting on behalf of the Skelton Group, have sold Castle Mill Industrial Estate on Birmingham New Road to Canmoor. The gated site, which extends to 172,858 sq ft, has 19 industrial and warehouse units ranging from 1,500 sq ft to 28,000 sq ft.

Alex Eagleton, who oversaw the sale, said the appetite for Midlands industrial investment opportunities remains high.

Church opens to show renovation

A CHURCH holds an open day during Black Country Day on Saturday.

St John's Church in Brockmoor, Brierley Hill, is swinging its doors open to allow visitors to see the progress of work on a major repair scheme at the church.

The listed building has been on the Heritage England At Risk Register, but this work, supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund, will help preserve it for future generations.

Dudley South MP Mike Wood will be attending the open day, which takes place from 10am until 2pm.

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COUNTY NEWS

Britons hiding up to £69bn in debts

NEW research suggests 16 per cent of people in the UK have debts they have hidden from their partner. Direct Line Life Insurance says an estimated 8.3 million Brits are hiding more than £69 billion of debt from loved ones.

Direct Line says the average debt hidden from a partner in the UK is £8,293, which would take about 15 weeks for the average Brit to pay off, even if committing their entire earnings to clearing the debt.

The largest number of hidden debts are on credit cards with 5.6m Brits owing an average of £2,109, or cumulatively £11.7bn, their partner doesn't know about.

Fuel prices fall below UK average

THE price for unleaded petrol and diesel in the West Midlands was below the national average last month, according to the latest AA Public Affairs fuel price report

The region's motorists were paying 128.4p a litre (£5.83 a gallon) compared to the UK average of 128.8p (£5.85). Diesel was 131.2p per litre (£5.96) against the national figure of 131.7p (£5.98)

Nationally average unleaded prices were up 3.3p per litre and diesel by 3.4p on the month.

The South East has recorded the highest prices for unleaded at 129.5p per litre and diesel at 132.4p.

Online tribute to demolished library

THE now-demolished Birmingham Central Library has been honoured in an online tribute to Britain's lost 20th century architecture. Demolishing Modernism features 10 of Britain's most iconic lost post-war gems.

Designed by famed architect John Madin, Birmingham Central Library was the largest public library in Europe when built and was one of three Brutalist buildings in the UK identified by the World Monuments Fund in 2012 as the best of their kind.

Seaside tales return to the Black Country

A SHOW is returning for a series of performances. The Black Country Touring's Life's A Beach show was devised from stories of seaside visits gathered in the area.

See it at Caldmore Community Garden, Walsall, on August 18; YMCA, West Bromwich, August 19; Tipton Library, August 22; Thimblemill Library, August 23; and Lightwoods House, Smethwick, August 26.

Detectives are to review Ryan case

THE stabbing of a footballer in a nightclub is being reviewed by detectives after a man accused of his murder was cleared by a jury.

Ryan Passey died from a knife wound after an argument broke out in Chicago's in Stourbridge town centre last August.

In February, Kobe Murray was found not guilty of the murder and manslaughter of the 24-year-old following a two-week trial at Birmingham Crown Court. Mr Murray admitted stabbing Ryan, but said it was an accident.

West Midlands Police last week confirmed it was reviewing the case.

A spokeswomen said: "We are in the process of conducting a review of this case and will continue to follow any positive lines of enquiry, discussing all options with the Crown Prosecution Service. We maintain regular contact with the family of Ryan Passey providing updates on the enquires, answering any questions and offering support."

The jury's verdict led to a campaign by the family of Ryan and family friend Jason Connon calling for a changed in the law changed to enable victims and their families to appeal against jury decisions.

Stoubridge MP Margot James has supported them. After the case the Conservative MP wrote to the Attorney General on the matter. The office has since replied, saying it will also look back over the case.

Ms James said: "I am continuing to work with Ryan's family and Jason Connon to provide any help I can in their campaign to see that justice is done for Ryan."

Bed-blocking figures are best in five years

By Dayna Farrington

BED-BLOCKING has been drastically cut to its lowest level in five years in part of the Black Country, new figures show.

Last year Dudley Council was awarded £13.9 million from the Government's Improved Better Care Fund to spend over three years to tackle some of the most pressing issues in health and adult social care.

In the first year, the council committed to spending £7m introducing measures to support older people to leave hospital, or a 'step-down' setting – typically a bed in a care home – as soon as they are medically fit.

It has already had the desired impact with a noticeable reduction in the number of cases of delayed transfer of care, known as bed blocking, with beds being freed up quicker for those who need them most.

Impact

Figures show that there was only one case of delayed transfer compared to more than 400 in August last year – and only 12 from 'step-down' settings compared to more than 100 in August last year.

Councillor Nicolas Barlow, cabinet member for adult social care, said: "Thanks to this investment we have introduced a raft of measures that are having a big impact on our health and social care services.

"We are now in a better position to move people through the system and discharge them from hospital or a step-down setting when they are at their strongest and their independence is at its peak.

"Not only is this giving the patient a much better experience but it's also freeing up much-needed beds in our hospital and step-down settings."

Some fin fishy about these factory workers

Former EastEnder Cheryl Fergison, right, Emma Rigby, Roison O'Neill, Deena Payne and keeper Jess Jones

FAMOUS faces from TV soaps soaked up the sun as they took a tour of Dudley Zoo dressed up as fish factory workers, ahead of their appearance of a new comedy show coming to Wolverhampton Grand Theatre.

Cheryl Fergison, best known for playing Heather in EastEnders, joined Emmerdale actress Deena Payne, Emma Rigby from Prisoners Wives, and Roisin O'Neill as they fed penguins during a visit to the zoo. They are the stars of Ladies' Day, which is running at the Grand Theatre from tonight (Friday) for two weeks.

It follows the adventures of fish factory workers during a day at the races. The show also features singer and actor Tony Christie, who is best known for his recording of Is This the Way to Amarillo?

Cheryl and co took time out of rehearsals to enjoy an ice-cream on the zoo's Ow Bin Ya Sands summer attraction and also got to practice the Black Country accent.

After feeding the penguins, Cheryl said: "It's been such a fun thing to do while we are getting ready for the production and good to see where some of our fish might end up."

Ladies' Day is written by Amanda Whittington and the Grand's production will feature more than 20 local actors.

Disability support service is launched

A SERVICE which offers support to people of all ages with physical or learning disabilities launches this month in Dudley borough.

The Dudley disability service supports children, young people and adults with disabilities or special educational needs living in Dudley borough. It supports them in aiming to achieve happy lives, helping them to become independent through gaining skills, knowledge and confidence.

The service was being officially launched at Dudley College yesterday (Wednesday).

Dudley disability service offers a range of care and support services, as well as signposting to enable people with disabilities or special educational needs, to live as independent and fulfilling lives as possible.

More importantly, the service works in partnership with each person to ensure that it meets the needs, desires and aspirations of them at an individual level, catering for their needs in the way they want.

Access

People using the service can access support including day services, family centres, technology enabled support, assisted living, residential care and respite care, employment support, health visiting and school nurse support. Practical matters such as housing support can also be provided and carers are not forgotten either, with access to the carers health and wellbeing service also provided.

To find out more visit www.dudley.gov.uk/resident/care-health/dudley-disability-service/ or call 0300 555 2345.

Poor hygiene costs businesses £44k

EIGHT businesses across Dudley have been fined a total of nearly £44,000 for breaching food and hygiene standards following swoops by environmental health officers over the past year.

At the same time, Dudley Council officers also helped destroy hundreds of tons of meat. The destruction was part of an investigation by the Food Standards Agency into a meat processor, which operated on sites across the country.

A report to council reveals council officers took eight business to court for breaking food regulations during the same year resulting in fines of £43,870.

Of the eight convictions, the largest fine was £18,000 for breaching food and hygiene rules.

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Atten-shun! Hospital to call on army experience

HOSPITALS in Dudley are asking the army to 'fall in' and help it recruit staff.

The Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust is looking to its local Army Reserves Centres to see if it can attract ex-military personnel and reservists with the right skills to Russells Hall Hospital, Dudley Guest Outpatient Centre and the Corbett Outpatient Centre in Stourbridge.

The trust has already been invited to attend a recruitment event at an Army Reserve Centre and now hopes it can run similar events in the future.

This year 81 student nurses are due to begin work with the trust in September but the high number of new entrants is causing worries about the balance of skills and experience.

A report to health bosses states: "These high numbers of student nurses and relatively few experienced nurses being recruited is now cause for concern in some areas.

"There are certain clinical areas that are attracting high numbers of newly qualified nurses – emergency department, community, coronary care, theatres and critical care – and these specialities are finding it difficult to support this skill mix."

The trust says it's planning to increase support it gives new recruits and is looking to train clinical support workers, who qualified as nurses in another country.

Store stops sales of kitchen knives

POUNDLAND has stopped selling kitchen knives at all of its West Midlands stores following a series of stabbings across the region.

The discount retailer said the decision to take knives off the shelves of 59 shops was in response to 'colleague and community concern'.

Keelan Wilson, aged 15, was stabbed to death in Merry Hill, Wolverhampton, in May. James Brindley, 26, was killed as he walked home from a night out in Aldridge last year and 24-year-old Ryan Passey died from a knife wound in Chicago's nightclub, Stourbridge.

Poundland retail director Austin Cooke said: "In the wrong hands, knives can be used for the wrong purpose."

College dance date

A SOCIAL dance is being held at Dudley College's Great Hall at the Broadway campus on Saturday. The ballroom, Latin American and sequence dance is from 8pm to 11.30pm. Call Fiona on (01384) 243451.

Rest days cancelled to protect Trump

Donald Trump – big protests anticipated

AROUND 1,000 rest days have been cancelled so West Midlands Police can send officers to London for Donald Trump's visit, which is due to start today (Thursday).

Up to 400 officers from the region are being dispatched to the nation's capital to deal with potential l unrest, with the US President expected to be greeted by thousands of protesters.

West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner David Jamieson has warned that providing support to the Met Police will have a 'major impact' on policing in the West Midlands.

He argued that funding cuts had left the force with 'no capacity' to support such operations. Some of the officers will be stationed in London for three days.

"I am extremely worried that our force is being put under a significant amount of pressure by being asked to help with national events, like President Trump's visit," said Commissioner Jamieson.

"It is right that world leaders are able to safely visit the UK. The problem is that cuts have left the force with no capacity.

" It means when it is asked to help it has a hugely negative impact on policing in our area as officers rightly take days off to recover.

"Not so long ago the force had 2,100 more officers which meant we had the capacity to manage when called on to police national events. Sadly cuts mean the thin blue line is thinner than ever."

A 'Stop Trump' protest has been organised in London for tomorrow (Friday) with groups of demonstrators set to travel from all over the country to take part.

Transgender children to help train school staff

TRANSGENDER children will talk to teachers and healthcare professionals about the challenges they face in schools in a bid to increase understanding of the issue.

The taxpayer-funded training will see three teenagers deliver classes in Dudley to raise awareness of the support required by transgender youngsters.

Session one is aimed at school staff, including teachers and school nurses, who will be told how it feels to be a transgender young person. A further session will be run for youth and social workers, who come in contact with transgender children out of school.

It is being organised by the Transgender Inclusive Schools Project (TISP), which is one of the first schemes of its kind in the country to focus on the needs of gender non-conforming teenagers.

Council bosses have hailed the training as a step towards a more tolerant and inclusive society. However, West Midlands MEP Bill Etheridge says it is 'pandering to the politically correct brigade'.

Professionals

Mr Etheridge, a former UKIP councillor in Dudley, said: "What training exactly have these young people had that allows them to lecture professionals who have spent many years training to get where they are now?More to the point, how can these individuals be so certain of their gender and sexuality as they are still in the adolescent phase? This kind of thing is pandering to the politically correct brigade and is an appalling use of tax-payers money."

Dudley Council leader Patrick Harley defended the training and said it could be extremely valuable.

"Bill's criticism of this shows exactly why he has always been on the political fringes," said the Conservative councillor for Kingswinford South. "Times are changing and as a society we have to be more tolerant and inclusive towards all people. If this training can help young people, and indeed help staff to better understand what is going on, then we should welcome it."

No easy ride into retirement

Ian and Christabel Harper aim to be the eldest couple to ride the full length of the Pacific Coast Highway

A HUSBAND and wife are attempting a new world record by driving 30,000 miles along the longest road in the world on a pair of motorbikes.

Ian and Christabel Harper want to enter the Guinness World Records as the oldest husband and wife team, in a combined age, to ride from Alaska to Argentina using two motorbikes along the Pacific Coast Highway. The couple, aged 54 and 60, from Stourbridge, will set off later this month and aim to raise £10,000 for mental health charity Mind.

Mr Harper said it should take them around six to seven months.

He added: "We a really wanted to have a go, it's been on my bucket list. Christabel is retiring as a teacher (from Harborne Academy), soinstead of heading off to relax – she's doing this."

To sponsor the couple visit www.justgiving.com/fundraising/ian-harper8

NEWS IN BRIEF

Uber Eats app reaches borough

ONLINE food ordering app Uber Eats has expanded into the Black Country.

The app allows people to order food to be delivered to their door from restaurants and takeaways, between 8am and midnight seven days a week.

Toussaint Wattinne, the general manager of Uber Eats in the UK, said: "We have been blown away with how popular the app has been in Birmingham, so we're really excited to be expanding further into Stourbridge, Kingswinford and Brierley Hill."

The app, downloadable from the App Store and Google Play, uses the same cashless system that Uber taxi app users will be familiar with is and partnered with many leading restaurant chains.

Merry Hill hunt for apprentices

MERRY Hill shopping centre is on the hunt for apprentices. The recruitment drive comes after a graduation ceremony to celebrate two of the region's students successfully completing the centre's apprenticeship programme.

Connor Rich and Max Ashman, both aged 20 and from Wordsley, are the first graduates of intu's apprentice scheme at Merry Hill and have now secured full time roles in the centre's technical department. The centre is planning to recruit two more apprentices, see www.intugroup.co.uk/en/careers for details.

Hall cafe open for band concerts

THE cafe at Himley Hall is extending its opening hours over the summer months for visitors to enjoy a series of band concerts.

A series of free open air concerts are being planned for the grounds of Himley Hall and Park on July 22, and August 5 and 26.

The coffee lounge is normally open Wednesday to Sunday from 11am to 4pm, but over the summer holidays it will open every day of the week.

There is also an opportunity for visitors to enter the hall's gallery space to see the latest exhibitions including the popular Lego Star Wars display.

Coroner's court call to relatives of pensioner

RELATIVES of a pensioner are being sought by the region's coroner.

Ian Townsend died at his Dudley home in Walker Street, Netherton, on June 26. Black Country Coroner's Court wants to get in touch with the 70-year-old's family. Contact coroner's officer Wendy Plummer on 0121 569 7200.

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IN MY VIEW
with Mark Andrews

Not really a sharp move by chiefs at Poundland

SOME things defy belief. The Black Country based discount chain Poundland has announced it will stop selling kitchen knives by autumn over concerns about knife crime. Certainly knife crime is a serious matter, but will this really help?

Presuming that we are still going to be allowed to eat in 21st century Britain, then people are going to need kitchen knives. Not just gangsters and hoodlums, but ordinary people too, for cutting up food and things like that. We all need them.

Maybe this is the beginning of a sea-change in the way we buy household cutlery. Perhaps in future people will have to provide ID and register their details with the local police station before buying a bread knife or a butter spreader. But that wouldn't work as most of our police stations have closed.

Hopefully, other retailers will take a more pragmatic approach, and continue to stock kitchen knives, meaning we can continue to eat food without having to tear it apart like wild beasts. But that means the bad guys will still be able buy knives as well, just from different retailers.

Now, I'm all in favour of banning these horrible combat and "zombie" knives which cause so much misery, but kitchen knives? Really?

As far as I can see, there are two explanations. The one is that Poundland believes its customers are more likely to be involved in crime than the much nicer people who buy their knives elsewhere. The other is that it's just a bit of hollow virtue-signalling.

■ ■ ■

MEANWHILE, Sandwell Council has come up with an innovative approach to tackling speeding drivers.

Motorists caught speeding outside Hamstead Junior School in Great Barr were given the choice of paying a fine, or being lectured by a group of 11-year-olds. Personally, I don't think this goes far enough. Why not do it properly and stick them in stocks in the playground, so the kids can throw school dinners at them?

While speeding outside a school is clearly irresponsible, this does seem a rather immature response. Two questions spring to mind: How much had the teachers 'coached' the children in what to say to the drivers, and what time did the transgressions occur? The worst offender was clocked at 35mph, which might well be dangerous when hundreds of children are crossing the road, but far less so when they are safely tucked away in assembly. Incidentally, Hamstead Junior School recently suspended two pupils for bringing 'large knives' into school. Maybe it has bigger things to worry about?

Grommets – and what we hear about them now

NHS founder Aneurin Bevan – spell-check for "Aneurin" suggests "unerring"

Monty Don – count the trowels hanging on the wall. There are nine of them

Tony Hancock – the forgotten comedian? But that's the way fame goes

'Miracle cure' that is now deemed risky

THE list of 17 procedures to be rationed by the NHS include ear grommets. I recall a persistent rumour from years ago that grommets, to fix a mysterious condition called glue ear, had been introduced chiefly to provide employment for ENT (ear, nose and throat) consultants who no longer removed adenoids or tonsils. We were told that grommets were a miracle cure. Now we are told they are among the procedures deemed unnecessary, ineffective or risky. Very odd.

AFTER a recent item on the obesity issue in Tredegar, home town of the NHS founder Aneurin Bevan, a reader suggests the NHS could launch fight-the-flab walking classes, to be named Tread Eager. Fans of Bevan will not be surprised that my computer spell-check for "Aneurin" suggests "unerring."

A COMMONS committee warns MPs that using Twitter is like "dipping their private parts in honey and exposing them to angry bees." Oh, please don't put ideas into their heads.

STILL dithering over having a tattoo? A heatwave reveals millions of them, on show from dawn to bedtime, and the ravages of the years. Those once-pert rosebuds on a shoulder now look like enormous tumours and those elegant lizards on the leg are doing a fine impression of varicose veins. Think on.

THE RSPCA is among organisations which called for a sky-lantern festival in the tinder-dry Peak District to be cancelled. While they are at it, they might ask the organisers to tone down the advertising. In its publicity bumf, The Lights Fest invokes the words of Martin Luther King: "Darkness cannot drive out darkness: only light

THE BEST OF PETER RHODES

can do that." I'm not entirely sure the US civil-rights legend was talking about flying naked flames over moorland in high summer. But, hey, why stop the advertising slogans at Dr King? Jesus said all sorts of stuff about light. Get Him on the posters, too.

GOOD old Auntie Beeb. England beat Colombia, the nation rejoiced and The World Tonight (Radio 4) took the view that the big story of the evening was the retirement age of judges in Poland being lowered from 70 to 65. Finger on the pulse, eh?

WHEN the authorities say the risk of nerve-agent poisoning in the Salisbury area is very low, does anyone seriously believe they know what they are talking about?

IN one Damon Runyon short story, the cops raid a bar and the gangsters hide all their guns in the pockets of an innocent customer, Tobias Tweeney. He is hauled before the court and becomes an instant Underworld hero, Twelve-Guns Tweeney. I am reminded of Tobias every time I see Monty Don in his potting shed in Gardener's World (BBC1). Count the trowels hanging on the wall. There are nine of them. Nobody needs that many. Who do ya think you're kidding, Nine-Trowels Monty?

A POSTER used by Adelaide University in Australia shows a group of five women apparently listening while the sole man in the group is talking. This, as the BBC reports, has led to complaints of "mansplaining." The problem with reporting anything involving this concept is that at some stage in your report you have to explain what mansplaining is, for the benefit of thickos who don't know.

SO at the end of its report, the BBC tells us: "Mansplaining is when a man explains an issue to a woman in a manner regarded as condescending or patronising." I wonder how many women (or men) felt patronised by the BBC report. Now we all have something new to take offence about: Beebsplaining.

OH, the irony. Back in the 1960s President de Gaulle of France repeatedly blocked Britain's attempts to join the Common Market. Fifty-odd years on, Barnier is just as intransigent. It seems that when it comes to Europe, whether we try to get in or try to get out, the road is blocked by some bloody-minded Frenchman saying: "Non."

MALADIES for our time. After heat exhaustion and sunstroke, watch out for a national epidemic of sunfreeze. A reader turned up for a meeting one hot day in shorts, only to be half-chilled to death by the air-conditioning.

WHEN millennials take over. Private Eye spotted a promotion penned by some bright young thing on The Independent's website concerning "the forgotten British comedian who paved the way for Alan Partridge and David Brent". The forgotten comedian? Tony Hancock. But that's the way fame goes. We now have a generation of nurses who, when you are giving blood and quip in a jocular sort of way: "A pint? Why, that's very nearly an armful" just look blank.

TALKING POINT

Ideas flow in the heat of battle to save water

IT'S a no-win situation – bitter cold, windy and wet, people complain; heatwave, people still complain.

I bumped into a woman shopping last week who said she could no longer stand the heat. I was sympathetic as it it is very difficult to work outside when it is so hot, until she said she had been sitting in her garden reading. I suggested she maybe could move into the shade. Oh no, too much of an effort! Unbelievable.

Personally I love the sunshine but painting benches in the garden the other day I will admit that I was sweating – sorry glowing, not too gently – at the end of it.

That day I had to deliver some items to friends and on the way could hear the sound of – despite pleas to limit water usage – a power washer.

Yes, they do use a lot of water, but on my return journey hours later it was still in use. Heaven knows how much water that must have used and yet people are urged not to fill up paddling pools even though they must take a fraction of the amount used for cleaning a patio, which surely could wait until the weather cools down.

And England fans take note. We may have enjoyed more success than Germany in this World Cup, but we're still lagging behind them at saving water.

In this country our average water usage per person per day is 140 litres. Germany's is 120 litres, while Belgium is even more efficient, using only 107 litres a day.

With the country basking in the hottest June for 40 years, the demand for water increased massively.

Water saving tips include putting away garden sprinklers – they can use as much as 1,000 litres of drinking water in one hour, which is more water than a family of four normally use in a whole day – and instead of having a bath, take a shower, which uses 40 fewer litres of water and it's quicker, which means you can get back to watching the football sooner!

And one tip from Severn Trent, which for some reason appeals to me, is to ditch chores like washing the car and make sure there's enough water to go round for everyone, especially during mornings and evenings when demand is much higher than normal.

If paddling pools put increased demand on water supplies, don't let the little ones miss out on fun in the sun – why not give them a bucket of water and a water pistol instead to keep them entertained.

On a final note, if everyone could just use around 20 litres less each it would make a massive difference to our water supplies. And in that way you can keep what matters most hydrated – you and your family.

SUE ATTWATER

Remarkable students mean future in safe hands

I am constantly being amazed by folk that I meet. This could be guests on the Omma n Chain show I host with local young lads Scott and Craig for Black Country Radio or in the community.

One of my second homes is St Michael's in Rowley Regis. For a few years I have been a small part of their Links and Student Voices group. I was lucky enough with Bren Hawthorne to work on the World War OneI project. It acknowledged the soldiers on the plaque found at St Giles' church.

The development of the project led to this inter-generational group of pupils and members of the church. The organic way it grew was to me a confirmation that ageism does not apply in this school.

The war project was just the tip of the iceberg as I knew the pupils (who have taken over the radio show a couple of times) had so much more they were involved with.

I was over the moon then to receive an invite to their presentation evening and also asked to sing two of the songs I had written for the project. The evening took the form of groups presenting aspects of various projects. The subject matter was diverse, from money raised (a considerable amount) for Birmingham Children's Hospital, another for Children of Chernobyl. There was a food bank project (with a brilliant rap) and a fascinating project that dealt with forms of identity and issues that we face in the 21st century.

When you think these students are 11 to 15, it makes all their efforts (driven by member of staff Kerry Whitehouse) all the more remarkable..

DR B DAKIN (BILLY SPAKE MON)
Rowley Regis

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

POST
Dudley Chronicle,
Chronicle Editorial,
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EMAIL
dudley.chrons@expressandstar.co.uk

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Waste of our urban rail route

YOUR letter writer, Len Hales asks 'where are the rail lines anymore?' (The Chronicle, July 5). The authorities, for 50 years, have been busy selling off urban railway lines for every kind of building imaginable that have all been granted planning permission by our whiz kid councillors!

The most recent was in October 2016 by Dudley councillors. Dudley Castle Hill railway station site is now getting built on when the railway lines and track bed are intact and run for 120km from Worcester to Derby. The former main line station at Castle Hill is now to be used for a £30 million suite of buildings for an innovation centre. All of this is outrageous and absurd.

Why sever a 120km railway through the congested West Midlands with a tramline, a test track, trees, Japanese knotweed and undergrowth, when we could have trains and stations back for less money?

TIM WELLER
Halesowen

Dogs die when a car becomes an oven

THERE have been numerous incidents again, reported on social internet sites, of dogs being left in cars, while their owners 'go shopping', etc.

With the current temperatures that we have, the temperature can soon rise to 120 degrees plus inside a car, even with windows slightly open.

This is probably equal to putting your Christmas turkey in the oven to cook it! The only difference is the turkey is already dead.

Leave your dogs at home with water and shade, or lose your pet for good. They cannot regulate their body temperature like us.

MARTIN STONES
Dudley

Help NHS survive 70 more years

NOW that the NHS has turned 70, it is an important time not only to celebrate all of the great achievements but to look forward to how we can improve it for the future.

The NHS remains an important and consistent part of the lives of many people in the West Midlands. Though it has survived the last 70 years in its current state, the NHS needs greater attention and investment if it is to survive another 70.

The recent announcement of funding by the Government is a welcome step but is short of the four per cent uplift that the British Medical Association (BMA) and many health policy experts have suggested is the minimum needed.

From the birth of a baby to palliative care at the end of life, the NHS is there for us when we need it most. The Government must ensure it is there for the NHS.

DR STEPHEN MILLAR
BMA West Midlands regional chair

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Pub was just seconds from gas explosion

A GAS leak in the cellars left Brierley Hill pub seconds away from an explosion while customers drank upstairs.

The Dog and Partridge has been stripped of its licence after safety fears were raised by British Gas.

Dudley Council's licensing panel heard how there were concerns the gas supply to the pub in the High Street had been illegally reconnected after being cut. On inspecting the premises, experts found there was a leak that left the pub 'seconds' away from becoming an 'explosive environment'.

British Gas officials warned a member of staff to put out a log burning fire and evacuate the premises. But both staff and customers refused to leave.

The panel heard a West Midlands Police spokesperson say that on March 8 British Gas asked for police assistance to gain entry to the pub and execute the warrant to disconnect the gas and electricity.

The Dog and Partridge in Brierley Hill was at risk of a gas explosion

Refused

"The caller had already been to the premises but had been refused entry. The premises had recently been visited by British Gas officers, it was found that they had their gas and electricity supply disconnected five months earlier. They had twice reconnected themselves."

A British Gas spokesperson told the meeting: "We were advised there may have been an illegal reconnection so we made a visit.We were refused access. Attended again, had to call a locksmith out, we asked for access to the gas located in the basement. Nobody would allow access. There was one member of staff working behind the bar who was completely non-compliant when we discussed the details.

"When we came into the basement where the gas service comes in from the road was completely open, there was no safety caps on it, as it would have been left, there was no meter. The basement had an extremely strong smell of gas. About five or six meters away from this open gas mains we also found a stolen electricity meter.

"We made a decision to quickly turn the handle off and decided we needed to retreat from the property. We tried to speak to the member of staff upstairs and made them very aware of the dangerous situation downstairs. They had a log fire burning in the pub at the time which they refused to extinguish. There was around seven or eight customers and we made them all aware it was extremely dangerous. They all refused to leave. When National Grid and Western Power attended they both agreed the safest course of action would be to dig up the street and remove the mains from the road."

Police visited licence holder Marguerite Field and she claimed she had nothing to do with the pub. A police spokesperson said: "We did point out to her that her name was still on the licence as the premise licence holder."

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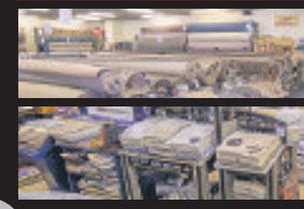

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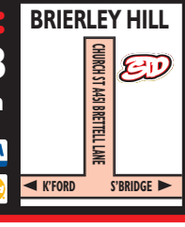

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Origins of museum explained

Wollaston E TWG

CHAIRMAN Julie Willetts welcomed 43 members and two visitors, the minutes of the previous meeting were read and agreed.

The treasurer gave a favourable financial report, followed by a précised version of the main points from the last Federation meeting.

The bowls season is in full swing and every Thursday morning in Mary Stevens Park, approximately 15 ladies in pink T-shirts may be observed hurling their bowls at a smaller jack.

The ambling group is also popular with members, as is the floral art section.

On the social side, a visit to the Wedgwood Factory in Stoke is planned.

It is hoped that our guild, supported by Federation and other local guilds, will organise a table to advertise townswomen's guilds during the Stourbridge Carnival on July 8.

The speaker for the evening was David Baker from Friends of the Black Country Museum, who with the aid of photographs explained the origins of the museum and how it has been extended over the years. Mr Baker's talk was both topical and interesting to members, who showed their appreciation.

Raffle prizes went to Marie Hughes, a visitor and Sue Llewellyn, while competition winners were Sandra Oliver and Elizabeth Grove. The chairman thanked refreshment ladies, Mary Gill and Pat Steele.

Insight into work of Compton Care

Kingswinford Ladies

THE ladies met at The Royal British Legion and were warmly welcomed by chairman Sheila Evans. The usual business matters were read, approved and signed.

Sheila is hoping to arrange a trip to The Beacon Centre for The Blind near Christmas to enjoy a tour and festive meal.

The speaker was Georgina Grainger who is part of the fundraising team for Compton Care.

She said it takes £7.9 million per year to run so constantly needs volunteers both in shops and to organise fundraising activities.

The summer appeal centres on sponsoring an extremely pretty, metal, purple sunflower to place in their garden for a suggested donation of £20 and later to take home if desired.

Georgina gave a very comprehensive insight into the nursing, aims and maintenance at Compton Care.

Christobel Groves gave the vote of thanks and Georgina picked the winning raffle tickets.

Tips for healthier mind and body

Stourbridge Ladies

A LARGE group of members and visitors attended. Following the club notices the chairman welcomed the speaker Carol Harris whose talk was entitled 'Living a Healthier Life'.

She began her talk by saying that as we are all living longer it is important to do everything we can to make our lives healthier.

A good night's sleep, something that older people find difficult, is needed to repair the body and brain.

If you can't sleep, get up, do something and then try again as the body apparently works in 90 minute cycles.

If you have worries and stress, think about other things, such as imagining a recent route taken. Any exercise is important and doing mind exercises such as crosswords and word puzzles, can increase the brain cells. A good diet is important, no forgetting five-to-10 a day a day. Prebiotics and probiotics were explained to stress the importance of having a healthy digestive system.

A vote of thanks was given for Carol's interesting talk.

Come and join the club for interesting speakers, outings, and friendship. There is always time for a chat over the tea at the end of the meeting.

Meetings are held in the Amblecote Room of Stourbridge Town Hall on the last Tuesday in the month, starting at 2pm.

For further information phone Mrs Hall on 01384 288841.

Singers enjoy 10th trip abroad

Dudley Choral Society

DUDLEY Choral Society enjoyed their 10th trip abroad with a concert at St Elisabeth Church, Begijnfofdries in Ghent, Belgium. They were also invited to join the Church Choir for Eucharist.

Following the service a visit was made to the largest Commonwealth War Grave Commission Cemetery at Tyne Cot where more than 12,000 First World War soldiers are remembered – 8,000 of these have no name.

A visit was also made to The Menin Gate. Several members visited Bruges whilst others explored the beautiful City of Ghent.

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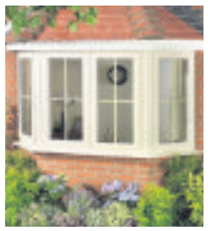

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Museum is playing a blinder for the future

THE boss of the Black Country Living Museum has set his sights high as plans for a new historic town on the Tipton Road site moves forward.

A new visitor centre will also be opened providing a new entrance for up to 5,000 people a day.

Both are on target to be opened by Spring 2022.

Chief executive Andrew Lovett said: "We are progressing with plans for the historic town and visitor centre. On the back of rising visitor numbers this is a very exciting time for the museum.

"We are also getting attention from across the world with the filming of Peaky Blinders and Antiques Roadshow.

"But we will never stand still and we will look to improve the attraction whenever we can.

"Our aim is to become one of the most impressive museums in Europe."

The £25 million project, called Forging Ahead, has been made possible partly thanks to a £9.8m grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund last year.

Boss Andrew Lovett in 'Charlie's Yard' from Peaky Blinders with Adrian Horton

Expansion

Further funding is hoped to come from the Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership, Arts Council England and Dudley Council.

Lowell Williams, chairman of the Black Country Living Museum Trust, said funding support marked 'an end and a beginning'.

In a report as part of the submitted accounts to the Charity Commission, he said: "The project –the single largest enlargement in the museum's history –will see us saving heritage, telling new and more diverse stories, targeting annual visitor attendance of 500,000."

The project, bosses say, will bring £100m to the local economy and create 143 full-time jobs. This month, architects are continuing to work on the plans for the historic town, and the buildings and their locations have been chosen. It will be based on two roads, Market Place and Pinfold lane, next to the attraction's fairground.

The attraction already has the bricks for one of the buildings. It had to move quickly when West Bromwich's Gas Showroom was knocked down. The bricks are now kept in safe storage at the museum.

Other buildings to be reconstructed include Dudley's Victorian Woodside Library, which closed in 2008, and the J H Lavender Aluminium Foundry from Crankhall Lane, in West Bromwich.

Also to be recreated at The Harris & Pearson Brickworks of Brierley Hill, Wolverhampton's Elephant and Castle Pub, the Lea Road Medical Centre from Wolverhampton and Stanton's Records, which stood on Hall Street, Dudley.

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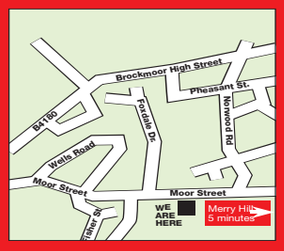

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£77m in Government funds for housing scheme

THE Government is pumping £77 million into a housing partnership to get more than 14,000 affordable homes built nationwide over the next four years. The money for the Matrix Housing Partnership will see 2,257 new homes in the Midlands.

It is part of the first wave of strategic partnerships agreed between the Government's Homes England agency to ramp up the building of affordable homes. The target is to build 14,280 additional affordable homes by March 2022.

The deals include homes for social rent in areas where house prices are particularly high, with the funding available boosted by the Government's announcement of an additional £1.67 billion for the £9bn affordable homes programme.

Eight partners have signed up to deliver more than 23,500 homes across all tenures, including for sale on the open market.

In total, Homes England will provide a funding package of just under £590m through to March 2022 to support the first wave of strategic partnerships with Matrix Housing Partnership, emh group, Great Places, Home Group, Hyde, L&Q, Places for People, and Sovereign/Liverty.

New homes being built by the Accord housing association in Woden Road, Wolverhampton

Experts at Aston Uni for UK tinnitus expo

THE UK's first-ever tinnitus expo is set to take place in Birmingham. The British Tinnitus Association (BTA) is hosting its inaugural 'Talking Tinnitus' event at Aston University on September 15.

It will bring together the wealth of information for people living with the condition. The day-long event, the first of its kind, will offer tinnitus sufferers the chance to try therapies and techniques, which aim to help manage the condition, as well as seeking help and support from the BTA and experts. The expo will feature an exhibitor hall of products and services designed to support the estimated six million people living with tinnitus in the UK.

David Stockdale, chief executive of the BTA, said: "We've already had bookings from people in Poland, Sweden and Jersey and are expecting lots of people to make the journey to Birmingham for this event."

Tickets cost £12 in advance from tinnitus.org.uk/Event/talkingtinnitus

Taxi driver attacked woman with knife

A DRUG-ADDLED taxi driver who attacked a woman with a knife while high on cocaine was starting an 18 month jail sentence last week

By John Scot

Abdul Jabbar knew the woman and had asked her to give him a lift when his vehicle was dropped off for repair.

The pair left in convoy after meeting by agreement in Highfield Road, Netherton, but he parked alongside a nearby block of flats and climbed into her car with a bag, Wolverhampton Crown Court was told.

The married 41-year-old admitted he was 'coked up' and had been taking drugs all night, revealed Mr Howard Searle, prosecuting.

The court heard how the defendant told the woman: 'Sorry, I don't know what I'm doing' before producing an eight inch blade knife from the bag.

Grabbed

The terrified woman tried to get out but was grabbed by the hair by Jabbar in the incident on August 26 last year, the court heard.

"She was kicking and screaming and managed to wriggle away from him to open her door," continued Mr Searle.

She got out and started to phone the police as he dashed round the car to put a hand over her mouth yelling: 'Shut up, shut up or I will stab you.'

Her cries for help were heard by a member of the public whose shouts spooked the attacker into throwing the victim to the ground and fleeing in his taxi. He was arrested soon afterwards.

The court heard that the petrified victim was not physically injured but is now frightened whenever she leaves her home and has had to change her car as it reminds her of the attack.

Mr Curtis Myrie, defending, said Jabbar's marriage was on the rocks and he had developed a serious cocaine problem.

Jabbar from Corporation Road, Dudley, admitted assault and threatening with a blade in a way that caused risk of serious harm.

He was sent to prison by Judge James Burbidge QC, who told him: "You pre planned to get a woman on her own in a car while 'coked up' and in possession of a knife.

"You had your own agenda but have not been entirely honest when claiming she had nothing to fear from you."

Troubled academy will switch trusts

A TROUBLED academy rated inadequate by school inspectors Ofsted is to be taken over by a new trust. The Ace Academy in Tipton has been in special measures for two years.

It is to leave control of the Education Central Multi-Academy Trust, run by the University of Wolverhampton. Leaders at the academy, which has more than 1,400 pupils, and was formerly known as the Alexandra School, were told by Ofsted in April that not enough progress was being made.

Parents have now been informed that the school will be taken over by another trust in an effort to bring about the improvement needed. The school has been beset by problems since converting to academy status.

Bike yobs may face on spot fines

ON-THE-SPOT fines of £100 will be dished out to yobs tearing around nature reserves and parks in parts of the Black Country including Sedgley and Kingswinford.

A Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) could be enforced after a wave of complaints about quad bikes causing a nuisance on green spaces.

The PSPO would give police and council officers the power to issue £100 fixed penalty notices for those caught using an unauthorised motorised vehicle on any of the green spaces affected. Failure to pay could result in a fine of up to £1,000 and officers can seize vehicles as well. The consultation deadline is 9am on July 20 via dudley.gov.uk

Follow yellow brick road

PERFORMERS preparing to follow the yellow brick road got together to welcome their newest recruits.

Members of Wolverhampton's Trinity Musical Theatre Company hosted its 'Over the Rainbow' barbecue to prepare for it's November community production of The Wizard of Oz, involving 72 local people. It will be staged at Sedgley's Dormston Theatre from November 20 to 24.

Beacon goes back to 1940s for forces celebration

A CHARITY and a housing association joined forces and stepped back in time to the 1940s to celebrate Armed Forces Day in Sedgley.

Staff, residents, families and friends from sight-loss charity Beacon at Sedgley and from Bromford of Wolverhampton Housing dressed in outfits from the Second World War era to create a proper 40s atmosphere. George Formby tribute act Joe Thomas went down a storm.

Bromford Housing's Jo Wright with Joe Thomas

They were showing their support for veterans and soldiers currently serving with a fun-themed day at Beacon Court on Wolverhampton Road East.

Fun

Annamarie Balram, business development manager at Beacon, said: "We wanted to show our support for all our troops, both past and present, who have given up so much. Everyone had fun and enjoyed getting dressed up.

"Beacon is a charity which is at the heart of the community and we want to recognise the vital role our forces play."

Beacon Court was draped in Union Flags and war posters for the day. There was also music from the Bluebird Belles, games and a ration raffle.

Trio of land girls – staff members Tanya Hampton, Pat Kosteczko and Kim Jones

Monument marks war centenary

A NEW monument is set to honour fallen Upper Gornal heroes and mark the 100 year anniversary of the end of the First World War.

Councillors in Upper Gornal, Dudley, have been working with the Oval and Tudor Tenants and Residents Association to secure funding for the new monument.

The new memorial will be located in the Arcade shopping precinct and will include a memorial stone – from by Wilkinson Stonemasons – set on a concrete pad with a flag pole and a 'Tommy' soldier figure as part of the 'There But Not There' campaign being run by the Royal British Legion. The project is supported by McDonald's in Upper Gornal.

Rescue from flat blaze

FIREFIGHTERS believe a house fire in Sedgley last week – that led to a woman being rescued – may have been caused by a toaster.

Fire crews used a ladder to reach the woman at a first floor maisonette on The Ridgeway, Sedgley, in the early hours emergency. She was treated for smoke inhalation but was not taken to hospital after refusing treatment.

Crews from Dudley, Tipton and Bilston fought the blaze.

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Magical Cornish tale from a Dudley author

Somewhere Beyond the Sea
Miranda Dickinson

LONG sandy Cornish beaches, a budding romance and a touch of magic – all the ingredients for a perfect summer read.

So much affection and familiarity is written into almost every line of this book that you would assume it was written by a born-and-bred resident of St Ives, where it is set, not a Black Country lass.

Author Miranda Dickinson clearly has an intense love of the area and its history, which seeps through in every chapter.

Sunday Times bestselling author Miranda lives in Dudley and has previously told how her first ambition was "to write a book worthy of display on the shelves of wonderful Kingswinford Library, which, at the time, was not much bigger than somebody's living room, but to wide-eyed five-and-a-half year old me was a palace of dreams."

With this her ninth book, having been published in seven languages and sold over half a million copies, she is now guaranteed a good spot in the library.

Heart

St Ives has clearly won a place in her heart and made a lasting impression with her latest chick-lit novel having been conceived a couple of years ago in the picturesque coastal town.

In fact much of it was written overlooking gorgeous Porthmeor Beach, her favourite, and regular visitors will no doubt recognise places, or maybe even themselves, such as Aggie's beach café which is based on the Porthgwidden Beach café

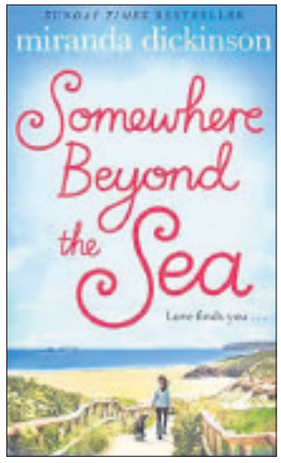
The novel follows the stories of shop owner Seren MacArthur and young father Jack Dixon who are both recently bereaved and both struggling with both emotional and financial challenges. Fate seems to intervene as their paths are repeatedly brought together.

They find themselves on opposite sides of a planning battle with Jack managing the redevelopment of a historic site, the derelict former home of a much-loved local astronomer, while Seren rallies the townsfolk in a fight to hold onto the building.

Seren's grief at the loss of her father is clearly quite overwhelming for her and is the motivation for almost everything she does. It comes across as very raw and touches the reader. Jack's loss is very different and it is not until the closing chapters that he, and we the readers, really understand it. Their grief is very vividly portrayed and may reflect the fact that Dickinson's own father died suddenly while she was writing the book..

Despite this sadness, and the blows that life deals both Seren and Jack, it is a warm and magical book. There is empathy and affection for the protagonists and it is a book that gives us all a little hope. The perfect book to have in your bag, or on your Kindle, when you hit the beach or relax in the heatwave.

Review by Diane Davies



Cover of the best-selling Dudley author's latest novel, set in Cornwall

Miranda Dickinson first became captivated by stories at Kingswinford Library

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Dee 07913260357
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Caroline 01562 888315
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Becki 07986 407934
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5pm & 7pm
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Caroline 01562 888315
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5.30pm & 7.30pm
Greenfield Primary School
Hill Street
Marie: 01384 893001
WOLLASTON
7.30pm
St James C of E School
Kingsway
Frankii 07812753765

NORTON
7.30pm
St. Michaels Church Hall
Maynard Avenue
Vikki 07824533476
CRADLEY HEATH
5.15pm & 7.15pm
Nether End Neighbourhood Centre
Mogul Lane
Amanda 07862 274058
PEDMORE
7pm
Chawn Hill Church, Chawn Hill
Pauline 07999408805
HAWBUSH
5pm & 7pm
Oakfield Community Centre
Brettle Lane
John 01384 423616
STOURBRIDGE
10am
St Thomas' Church Hall
Market Street
John 01384 423616
DUDLEY
5pm & 7pm,
Central Methodist Church
Cross Street
Sarah 07837 950797

FRIDAY
STOURBRIDGE
9am & 11am
The Bonded Warehouse
Canal Street
Joanne 07725 987340
CRADLEY HEATH
9.30am
Nether End Neighbourhood Centre
Mogul Lane
Amanda 07862 274058

SATURDAY
CRADLEY HEATH
8am, 10am, 12pm
Nether End Neighbourhood Centre
Mogul Lane
Amanda 07862 274058
HAWBUSH
7.30am, 9.30am, 11.15am
Oakfield Community Centre, Brettle Lane
Joanne 07725 987340
WALL HEATH
8.30am
Wall Heath Community Centre, Enville Road
Matthew 07815961414
DUDLEY
9.00am
St Frances Parish Church, Laurel Road
Vinny 07412 074954
PEDMORE
9am & 11am
Chawn Hill Church, Chawn Hill
Pauline 07999408805

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Cannabis conviction rate falls by a third

JUST 14 people were jailed for cannabis possession in the West Midlands last year as convictions for holding the drug plummeted by a third.

In 2012, a total of 1,047 people were found guilty of cannabis possession, according to figures from the Ministry of Justice. But by 2017 this number had dropped by 37 per cent to 663.

Of those successfully prosecuted by West Midlands Police, 442 were given a fine or a discharge, while only 14 spent any time behind bars.

West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner David Jamieson said the low conviction rate is partly down to a steep reduction in officer numbers.

He explained: "There are more than 2,000 fewer officers than there were eight years ago. This has led to a combination of two factors, fewer people to enforce the law and they have had to focus on issues that cause the most harm, such as violent crime."

Freddie-Lee Johnson, 16, centre, with staff and students at The Brades Lodge in Tividale

Friends bike and hike to support pal Freddie

THEY cycled, they hiked and they came together to support for a friend. Staff and students from The Brades Lodge school in Tividale took the mammoth journey from the Black Country to Snowdon in a bid to raise funds for two cancer charities.

Head of school Simon Hobbs said the school's students had rallied in support of fellow pupil Freddie-Lee Johnson, 16, who was diagnosed with testicular cancer last November.

Freddie's best friend Bradley Massey, 16, led the 120-mile cycle from Lower City Road to Mount Snowdon – where the group camped for a night before hiking to the summit. Mr Hobbs said: "It was very tough. The cycling was just around 100 miles and it took its toll but was well worth it with more than £1,000 raised. It is amazing for a small school to raise that amount of money, it is the most we have ever raised. Freddie came out for the photos. He was just too unwell to do the event."

The money will go towards the Teenage Cancer Trust and the Odd Balls Foundation.

To donate visit www.justgiving.com/fundraising/simon-hobbs4 or www.justgiving.com/fundraising/simon-hobbs5

'Horrifying' figures over liver disease

HOSPITALS across the Black Country and Staffordshire treated more than 450 patients for alcohol-related liver disease last year, new figures reveal.

The NHS figures represent a 35 per cent increase in the illness over the last five years and have led to calls for setting a minimum price per unit of alcohol to curb problem drinking.

Accident and emergency teams in Wolverhampton treated 109 patients for booze-fuelled liver disease last year – a rate of 52 for every 100,000 people and 75 per cent up from 2012. The rate for the whole of England is 26 for every 100,000 people.

Sandwell and West Birmingham Clinical Commissioning Group treated 165 patients, while in Walsall A&E teams treated 79.

Reduce

A total of 86 patients were treated for alcohol-related liver disease at Dudley's Russells Hall Hospital, and the Stafford and Surrounds Clinical Commissioning Group saw 21 patients, according to the figures.

Professor Roger Williams, director of the Institute of Hepatology, said the statistics for England were 'horrifying' and proposed setting a minimum price per unit of alcohol to reduce cases of liver disease.

"Liver disease is the only exception to the improvement over the past years in

By Peter Madeley

life expectancy for chronic disorders such as strokes, heart disease and many cancers," he said.

Mortality rates have increased by around 600 per cent in the last 50 years, due to a nationwide increase in alcohol consumption which experts say is linked to a reduced cost of booze in shops.

Prof Williams added: "Setting a minimum alcohol price is a highly effective way of dealing with the problem. In Canada, they had a 14 per cent drop in emergency admissions and 8 per cent drop in mortality in the first twelve months after setting this minimum."

Judi Rhys, CEO of the British Liver Trust, called on GPs to improve their awareness of the risk of factors. She said: "Liver disease is a silent killer because there are often no obvious symptoms in the early stages.Three quarters of people are diagnosed in a hospital when the condition is quite advanced."

Mirror, signal, watch out for that pothole

POTHOLES should be included in the hazard perception test and Highway Code as the continued deterioration of UK roads is now badly affecting learner drivers, according to The AA.

Pothole-ridden roads are causing driving tests to be abandoned and special advice for learner drivers, according to a poll of AA Driving School and BSM instructors.

In the survey all who responded said they encounter potholes on every or most driving lessons. The majority said they had broken down during a lesson at least once in the last 12 months because of pothole damage Damage to tyres, wheels and suspension were the most common problems.

The AA wants potholes to be included in the hazard perception part of the driving test and advice included in the Highway Code. The breakdown service also said only London saw more pothole-related damage than the West Midlands.

Town's England hero gets timely makeover

Fresh look for the Duncan Edwards statue in Dudley

THE statue of Dudley's favourite football hero received a World Cup makeover – just in time for England's quarter final match with Sweden on Saturday.

The bronze statue of Duncan Edwards, which sits in Dudley town centre, underwent a process of re-patination last week.

A metalwork specialist used wax and heat during the process to restore the white of Duncan's England shirt, before scaffolding was removed later in the day – ahead of the key game against Sweden, which sent England into last night's quarter-final against Croatia.

Duncan Edwards played for England and impressed people from around the world with his talent. He tragically died aged 21 from injuries he sustained in the Munich air disaster in 1958.

Exciting

Dudley Council leader Councillor Patrick Harley said: "Duncan is our home-grown hero and we are delighted that this restoration work is being undertaken at such an exciting time for England's World Cup hopes.

"The statue is a focal point in the town and I'm sure this work will bring good luck to our boys over in Russia."

The statue, which was cast in bronze, was created by artist James Butler RA, in 1998.

As football fever grips the borough, Dudley Council is also flying the England flag from the top of the Council House ahead of the England games.

Hugely-talented midfielder Edwards made a major impact on the game in relatively short time he played. Despite his tender age, Edwards racked up 151 appearances for Manchester United and scored 20 goals.

He also won 18 caps for England, scoring five times. He became the youngest player to play for his country in the post-war period, aged 18, in 1955 – a record that stood until Michael Owen made his international debut in 1998.

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Lenny's Wonder-ful new look as Stevie

ISN'T he lovely? Look closely and you'll notice it isn't actually Stevie Wonder at all – but none other than Sir Lenny Henry.

The Dudley comedian and actor signed, sealed and delivered a performance as the soul legend as part of a special BBC show which will mark his forthcoming 60th birthday.

Sir Lenny stepped out in the singer's trademark sequinned jacket, complete with sunglasses and braids and swayed at the keyboard in homage to the music star.

The comedian, who turns 60 next month, was filming scenes for the show which will be hosted by Sir Trevor McDonald and looks back on his successful career as the BBC says a special 'happy birthday to you'.

Stevie Wonder wasn't the only character Sir Lenny took on – he also posed as grime artist Stormzy, wearing a red Adidas tracksuit and white trainers.

The special BBC tribute will air next month and features several sketches and special guests.

Sir Lenny said: "This is a great honour. I'm very chuffed to have my comedy work celebrated like this."

Sir Lenny pictured last month

Sir Lenny as soul legend Stevie Wonder in TV special

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BABY & KIDS CLOTHING
CAKES
EYE BROWS & BEAUTY
DANCE STUDIO
WHITE ELECTRICAL GOODS
MMA GYM
AFRO CARIBBEAN
FLORIST
SHOES
BLADING AND PIERCING
WATCHES
NET CURTAIN CLOTHING ALTERATIONS
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BAKERY
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BUTCHERS
CARDS AND GIFTS

Walk in Hagley Hall parkland for charity

A WALK in the park will be held at Hagley Hall on Sunday, July 29, raising money for Mary Stevens Hospice.

The Hall grounds will be opened up especially from 11am to 4pm for the day to help raise funds for the hospice which provides palliative for people in the Black Country and nearby areas.

Walkers will be able to enjoy exclusive access to Hagley Hall's stunning grounds, including a chance to view the newly refurbished waterfall and parkland.

Tickets cost £5 for adults and are free for those aged 15 and under. These will be available on the day at the hall or by calling (01562) 883834.

Walkers are encouraged to bring along a picnic to enjoy in the grounds but dogs are not allowed on this walk.

Event organiser,Sue Williams said "This is a lovely opportunity to see the grounds at Hagley Hall.

"We are most grateful to Lord Cobham for allowing us access in order to raise funds for such a worthwhile cause."

Cone celebrating local heritage on Black Country Day

AN HISTORIC Wordsley visitor attraction will be celebrating all things Black Country and its own remarkable 350 year heritage on Saturday.

There will be two guided canal walks which take people through the history of glassmaking in the area, pointing out areas of industry, locations of former works and the homes of workers and factory owners.

To join in this flat, free walk call 01384 815571 to book a place.

Dr Kate Round will be delivering short talks throughout the day on the magic of glass. Discover the science behind this beautiful material and why glass goes cloudy in the dishwasher.

There will be a Bostin Black Country Teenage market with young stallholders showing off their business and creative skills, items for sale include jewellery, cupcakes, soap and art.

The regular free Sticky Saturday session will be running as normal, but with a black country theme and extended hours from 11am-4pm. Drop in and take part in a free craft activity. There will also be glassmaking demonstrations in the cone's hot glass studio from 11am-4pm.

Councillor Ian Kettle, cabinet member for regeneration and enterprise said: "The Red House Glass Cone is perfectly placed to celebrate Black Country Day. It has played a key part in the area's industrial past, and is still a busy venue today, playing a role in supporting small businesses and attracting visitors to the area.

Craft

"With walks, talks, family craft activities, glassblowing demonstrations and the ever popular Teenage Market, there's something for everyone at the cone this Black Country Day."

The Red House Glass Cone was built at the end of the 18th century for the manufacture of glass and continued to produce glassware until 1936. It is one of only four cones remaining in Britain and is the most complete example in Europe – the others are located in Scotland, Newcastle-upon-Tyne and Sheffield. It is Grade 2* listed and a Scheduled Ancient Monument. Dudley Council opened it as a visitor attraction in 2002, and the site has developed to include a range of businesses, artists studios, hot glass workshop, café and a exhibitions.

Rare chance to visit garden

Blooming lovely – a view of John's Garden at Ashwood Nurseries

THE owner of Ashwood Nurseries, near Kingswinford, will be opening his own private garden to the public on Saturday in aid of charity.

John Massey will be showing his garden from 10am to 4pm in aid of WINGS, the Wombourne Special Needs Support group. in aid of local charity WINGS, Wombourne Special Needs Support Group.

John's Garden in July sees a glorious display of herbaceous perennials, daphnes and clematis in flower. For hydrangea enthusiasts, a selection will be on show and the tropical border will be full of dramatic foliage and exotic hot colours, as will the South African border. The ruin garden on the patio is a unique feature and also well worth a look.

John's Garden at Ashwood Nurseries is an impressive wonderful three acre private garden created by John Massey VMH. Informal borders, island beds, woodland dells and a wildlife meadow are set against the beautiful backdrop of the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal. It is a 'plantsman's garden' that has an abundance of rare plants as well as many familiar favourites.

The admission fee will be £5 (cash only).

Last chance to see comedy star on his farewell tour

HE'S a star of Mock the Week and Live at the Apollo but those who have yet to see Canadian comic Stewart Francis live are running out of time – he has announced one final tour.

A winner of the Dave's Funniest Joke Of The Fringe award, the one-line wizard has become a household name in the UK

Now touring for the last time, his Into the Punset show will stop off in Dudley, Birmingham and Wolverhampton, among other towns and cities.

Fans can see him at Bromsgrove's Artrix Theatre on October 11, Malvern's Forum Theatre the next day and Dudley Town Hall on October 13. He is at Birmingham Town Hall on November 1 and the following day at Wolverhampton's Wulfrun Hall.

Hospice tell of care available for the homeless

MARY Stevens Hospice staff have delivered a workshop to improve the awareness of palliative care for the homeless and vulnerable in Dudley borough.

Gemma Allen and Claire Towns ran the one-off session for staff from West Midlands Police, Midland Heart and Dudley Council. The session was over-subscribed with 14 community figures attending.

Gemma Allen, diversity and inclusion project lead, said: "Mary Stevens Hospice's strategic vision is to provide more care for more people in our community including people from marginalised groups. We are not only raising awareness of the services we provide but educating frontline staff working directly with those who are homeless and vulnerable."

The Ticket

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COLLABRO HITS THE HIGH NOTE

INSIDE

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TV is great but we prefer to sing live!

Back in the day, Jamie Lambert used to drive past the Royal Albert Hall and the London Palladium and dream. He was working part-time in the finance department of Barts Health NHS Trust, in London, and looking for a break.

And while he hoped he might one day sing at such incredible venues or enjoy chart success, he realised it wasn't sensible to bank on that.

And then his life changed.

He became friends with Matt Pagan and the two of them used social media to find three other singers to complete the Collabro line-up. They gigged at a pub near London Bridge and decided to audition for Britain's Got Talent, figuring they had nothing to lose.

A month after forming, they found themselves singing for Simon Cowell, Amanda Holden, Alesha Dixon and David Walliams. Their rendition of Stars, from Les Miserables, earned them a standing ovation.

Four months later, they appeared on BGT's live final – and won by a landslide with more than a quarter of the vote. Things have never been the same since. They signed a million pound record deal and their debut album went to number one. They headlined the London Palladium and sold 50,000 tickets for their tour, as well as joining Cliff Richard on his major headline tour of the UK.

Jamie says it's been a whirlwind. "It's been fabulous. I loved working at Barts but Collabro has changed my life dramatically and sometimes it's a bit weird to drive past where I used to work. It's been four years now and we've just announced the fourth major tour and fourth album."

That tour will visit Birmingham's Symphony Hall on April 15 and Wolverhampton's Grand Theatre on April 16 next year – before they return to the Albert Hall a few days later.

Prior to that, they'll play Telford's The Place In The Park Festival on August 16 and then support Barry Manilow at Birmingham's Arena on September 4. It's a busy old year.

"We have a very dedicated fan base and we're gigging throughout the year. The people who follow us feel very much like fans for life; it's almost like a family. The fans are very much valued.

"From our perspective, we hope to keep going for a long time. We each have our own little bits outside the band and do separate pantos but then we get back together to do these epic 50-date tours."

Jamie keeps his feet on the ground and doesn't forget how fortunate the band are. One minute he was working in the NHS – within a month or so he was on TV for the start of an incredible ride.

"We are privileged to have been going for four years. Last year we released our own album and it still got into the top 10 and when it comes to touring we're doing more tickets than ever before. We're having to look forward for about a-year-and-a-half.

"We work and arrange our own stuff. We still perform to tens of thousands of people all the time and there is a degree of pride in how things have gone. We've always worked to bring musical theatre to more people – that was our aim when we did BGT. By combining musical theatre with that boy band group thing, we wanted to appeal to more people."

On a song – Collabro will be appearing in Telford in August

Jamie has mixed feelings about Britain's Got Talent. Much of it was surreal as the band found themselves becoming an overnight success. Other bits were entirely forgettable.

"The truth about BGT is that a lot of it was awful. It's sort of like anything that's incredible, there's always a terrible side. It was almost like getting into a new relationship where everything's a crazy and a buzz but also mad. There was a downside and you have to remember that this is a crazy and competitive industry.

"To go from playing in a pub to being in front of 12 million and to go from 300 Twitter followers to 100,000 was remarkable. We went from zero to 100 in six weeks. We were quite lucky that a couple of us were business-minded. We weren't teens and we weren't too star struck. But it's so easy to get caught up in the madness of it. I'm just grateful that we've lived through that. These days, it's much better. We control everything and work together well. It's been two years as a four and we get on so well. The system works, it's like a well-oiled machine."

Though Collabro emerged from the world of TV, they are happiest when they're in theatres.

> *It's so easy to get caught up in the madness of it – it's better these days*

Playing to a live audience gives them the greatest buzz of all, which is why they undertake such gargantuan tours.

"While TV is great, we love that, we also enjoy performing live, probably even more. That's why the next tour is so cool. Most bands don't last but we're already looking ahead towards our sixth year.

"We are four best friends who go on the road and when it's finished we go out for a drink. We all have our separate lives as well. When you first move to London, you don't have that life. But these days, we can take time away from the band which is super healthy.

"When people win these TV talent shows, a lot of them get wrapped in cotton wool so they last two minutes. They think they'll be the next Beyoncé and they stop working at it. They're not nice to people. It's all wrong.

"We are known for being overtly accommodating and easy to be around. We're very hard working too. When we won BGT, we sent all 60 production crew members chocolates and flowers and cards."

The band's low-key approach extends to their tour. " That's the way we work. You see some people's riders and they are crazy. For us, it's a bottle of red a bottle of white wine and some Haribos."

Andy Richardson

● **For more entertainment news and reviews see The Ticket in your Express & Star every Friday.**

Kevin and Karen Clifton

Dance show goes on after golden couple's split

THE show will go on for Strictly Come Dancing married couple Kevin and Karen Clifton despite their break up.

The dance duo will continue as professional partners in their spectacular touring show – Kevin and Karen Dance – which is at Symphony Hall, Birmingham, on Saturday.

In a high-energy performance filled with heart-pounding choreography and sparkling costumes, Kevin and Karen will be dazzling audiences.

Backed by a supporting cast of dancers and a live 12-piece show band, Kevin and Karen's most famous routines from the top TV show will be brought to the stage – and the duo are looking forward to performing together.

Kevin said: "Privately we're not together right now but dance is the glue that holds us together.

"We're having a great time creating a brand new show filled with sassy glamour and edge-of-your-seat routines."

Karen and Kevin have appeared on Strictly Come Dancing since 2010 and 2011, respectively.

They first met as dancers on the stage show Burn The Floor and first appeared on Strictly when they were engaged.

The couple tied the knot in July 2015, with the marriage being the second for both dancers.

However, they have since gone their separate ways in their private lives – even though they're still performing live together.

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Unheard Hancock as lost scripts found

Two lost Tony Hancock radio scripts from the 1950s are to be performed in Stourbridge later this year.

Billed as The Lost Hancocks: Vacant Lot, the production has a cast including impressionist James Hurn (BBC2's Dead Ringers) and Janice Connolly (AKA Mrs Barbara Nice).

In 1952 West Bromwich comedy writer Larry Stephens convinced the BBC to let him create a series for his friend and rising star Birmingham's Tony Hancock. Entitled Vacant Lot, the series focused on life in the faded fictional seaside town of Churdley Bay, where the blundering, pompous Hancock aspires to better his lot.

Despite a cast of colourful characters (with Peter Sellers, Spike Milligan and Kenneth Connor all mooted for roles), Vacant Lot was never recorded and lay buried in the BBC archives until now.

Larry Stephens wrote much of Hancock's stage material as well as sketches for his ATV series, The Tony Hancock Show. Writing on his own and with such future legends as Spike Milligan and Eric Sykes, he penned material for Peter Sellers, Harry Secombe, Bernard Braden, Dickie Valentine, Jon Pertwee and Arthur Askey. A key figure in the development and success of The Goon Show, he went on to work for TV hit The Army Game before dying suddenly in 1959, aged just 35.

The Lost Hancocks: Vacant Lot will be performed at Stourbridge Town Hall on September 19, as part of the build up to Birmingham Comedy Festival. The only other performance this year is at the British Library in London.

Tickets for the Stourbridge show are available online at www.boroughhalls.co.uk or by calling (01384) 812812.

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WOLVERHAMPTON MAGAZINE

Enjoy a Flat Pint with joker Jonny

Black Country comedy songsmith Jonny Cole will be on home ground when he lines up with The Flat Pint of Mild at Bilston's Robin 2 on Thursday, July 19. He is back with his full band line-up and is aiming to make fans move as much as laugh. Cole has taken the Midlands comedy scene by storm and has performed alongside such star comics as Ross Noble, Joe Lycett and Mark Watson. Cole is back with a new set of comedy songs and parodies, to leave fans rocking and rolling with laughter.

Mini mania for Italian Job orchestral revival

One of Britain's most iconic films, The Italian Job, will return to the big screen at Birmingham Symphony Hall on Sunday with an orchestra playing the famous Quincy Jones score live to the picture. The HD remastered version of the 1969 film starring Michael Caine, Noel Coward, Benny Hill, a young Robert Powell and some fabulous Minis, will be accompanied by a live orchestra for the first time. They will play the famous soundtrack by legendary composer and producer Quincy Jones, including the song On Days Like These during the opening sequence. Quincy Jones composed the soundtrack, including Getta Bloomin' Move On, usually referred to as The Self-Preservation Society. The movie also includes one of film history's most famous one-liners: "You're only supposed to blow the bloody doors off!"

SATURDAY'S TV JULY 14

CHOICE

Emma Willis

The Voice Kids (ITV, 8pm)
New series. Emma Willis returns with the junior version of the singing talent contest, giving youngsters between the ages of seven and 14 a chance to achieve stardom. The Voice UK's Will.i.am returns as one of the three coaches, with McFly's Danny Jones and pop star Pixie Lott occupying the other two spinning red chairs. Up for grabs this time is a £30,000 prize to contribute to the winning child's musical education, along with a family holiday to Disneyland Paris.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **10.00** Saturday Kitchen Live. **11.30** Simply Nigella. (R) **12.00** Bargain Hunt. (R) **1.00** BBC News; Weather. **1.15** Wimbledon 2018. Sue Barker presents live coverage.
6.50 BBC News.
7.00 Regional Programme.
7.10 Pointless Celebrities. Alexander Armstrong and Richard Osman put a selection of TV experts through their paces in the unorthodox general knowledge quiz show, asking them to team up with colleagues and contemporaries to provide the least-likely correct answers to a series of questions posed to members of the public. The House That £100K Built presenter Kieran Long teams up with fellow architecture specialist Piers Taylor, while Homes Under the Hammer host Martin Roberts joins forces with Selling Houses' Amanda Lamb. Fifth Gear duo Vicki Butler-Henderson and Tiff Needell combine their wits, and weather forecasters John Hammond and Laura Tobin also compete. (R)
8.00 Who Dares Wins. Nick Knowles presents the game show in which two pairs of complete strangers team up, each battling to outdo the other by listing as much as they know about a given subject.
8.40 Casualty. New paramedic Ruby (former EastEnders star Maddy Hill) is pushed to her limits on her first day with Iain and Sam. Alicia struggles to work with Eddie and her outbursts increase.
9.30 Mrs Brown's Boys. Agnes and the Brown family await the fruits of their fraud after faking Grandad's death to get a payout, but the insurance company starts to grow suspicious. (R)
10.00 BBC News; Weather.; National Lottery Update.
10.20 MOTD: FIFA World Cup 2018 Highlights. Jason Mohammad introduces action from the third place play-off, which took place at Saint Petersburg Stadium, as the semi-final losers did battle for the bronze medal.
10.50 Today at Wimbledon. Clare Balding presents highlights of the penultimate day's play.
11.50 MOTD: FIFA World Cup 2018 Replay.
1.35 Weather for the Week Ahead. **1.40** BBC News.

BBC2

6.35 Marrying Mum and Dad. **7.00** Officially Amazing Goes Bunkers. **7.30** The Dengineers. (R) **8.00** Naomi's Nightmares of Nature. (R) **8.30** Deadly Dinosaurs with Steve Backshall. (R) **9.00** Super Cute Animals. (R) **10.00** Athletics: Diamond League Highlights. **11.00** Wimbledon 2018. **12.30** The Best Dishes Ever. (R) **1.00** Kew on a Plate. (R) **2.00** Garden Rescue. (R) **2.45 Film:** An Ideal Husband. (1999) Oscar Wilde comedy drama, starring Cate Blanchett. **4.15** Wanted Down Under. (R) **5.00** Flog It! (R) **5.50** H Is for Hawk: A New Chapter – Natural World. (R)
6.50 Wimbledon 2018. Sue Barker presents further live coverage on day 12 at the All England Club, featuring action from the men's and ladies' doubles finals on Centre Court at SW19. Last year, the corresponding matches were completely different in terms of their competitiveness. In the men's match, the Polish-Brazilian pairing of Lukasz Kubot and Marcelo Melo overcame Austrian Oliver Marach and his Croatian partner Mate Pavic in five sets, eventually sealing a 5-7, 7-5, 7-6 (7-2), 3-6, 13-11 victory. The ladies' match that followed was a far more one-sided affair, with second seeds Ekaterina Makarova and Elena Vesnina beating ninth seeds Chan Hao-ching and Monica Niculescu 6-0, 6-0.
9.00 Reginald D Hunter's Songs of the Border. Against the backdrop of President Trump's planned construction of a wall between the two countries, the comedian takes a 2,000-mile musical road trip along the US-Mexico border. He explores how romance and reality play out musically, where third-world Mexico meets first-world USA on "the broken road to the American Dream".
10.15 Film: Mississippi Grind. (2015) Premiere. Two gamblers go on a road trip alongside the Mississippi river to compete in a high-stakes poker game in New Orleans. Drama, starring Ben Mendelsohn and Ryan Reynolds.
11.55 Golf: Scottish Open. Eilidh Barbour presents highlights of the third round of the European Tour event at Gullane Golf Club in East Lothian, where Rafa Cabrera Bello entered as the defending champion.
12.55 Picnic at Hanging Rock. (R) **1.50** This Is BBC Two.

ITV

6.00 CITV: Sooty. **6.10** Grizzly Tales for Gruesome Kids. (R) **6.20** Grizzly Tales for Gruesome Kids. (R) **6.35** Dino Dana. (R) **6.50** Mission Employable. (R) **6.55** The Oddbods Show. (R) **7.05** NinjaGo: Tournament of Elements. (R) **7.30** The Haunted Hathaways. (R) **7.55** Drop Dead Weird. **8.25** ITV News. **8.30** Zoe Ball On Saturday. **9.25** James Martin's American Adventure. **9.55** Best Walks with a View with Julia Bradbury. (R) **10.20** The Best of the Voice Worldwide. **11.20** The Best of the Voice Worldwide. **12.20** ITV News; Weather. **12.30** ITV Racing: Live from Newmarket. Coverage from Newmarket, York and Ascot. **2.30** FIFA World Cup 2018. Coverage of the third place play-off (Kick-off 3.00pm). **5.15** Catchphrase. (R)
6.00 ITV News; Weather.
6.15 Regional Programme; Weather.
6.30 Japandemonium. New series. A review of the best Japanese TV, showcasing some of the maddest and funniest moments ever broadcast.
7.00 Celebrity Catchphrase. Stephen Mulhern hosts a star-studded version of the game show, as Jennie McAlpine, Jason Watkins and Ore Oduba try to "say what they see" in an effort to win £50,000 for charity.
8.00 The Voice Kids. New series. Emma Willis returns with the junior version of the talent contest, as Will.i.am, Danny Jones and Pixie Lott give youngsters aged from seven to 14 a chance at stardom.
9.35 ITV News; Weather.
9.55 Film: The Bourne Supremacy. (2004) The amnesiac assassin is living quietly in hiding, until his former employers come after him again and murder his girlfriend. A CIA operation has ended in disaster, and those responsible intend to clear their names by implicating Bourne. As the former secret agent tries to evade the hitmen on his trail, he also struggles to piece together the truth about his past. Action thriller sequel, starring Matt Damon.
11.55 Stuck on You: The Football Sticker Story. How four Italian brothers took a childhood obsession and turned it into a worldwide industry – and the British upstarts who took on the mighty Panini to beat them at their own game. (R)
12.55 Jackpot247. **3.00** Mr Selfridge. (R) **3.50** ITV Nightscreen.

CHANNEL 4

6.05 Marathon: Transvulcania Ultra. **6.30** Mobil 1: The Grid. **7.00** The King of Queens. (R) **7.25** The King of Queens. (R) **7.55** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.25** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.55** Frasier. (R) **9.25** Frasier. (R) **9.55** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **10.25** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **10.55** The Simpsons. (R) **11.25** The Simpsons. (R) **11.55** Come Dine with Me. (R) **12.55** Four in a Bed. (R) **1.25** Four in a Bed. (R) **2.00** Four in a Bed. (R) **2.30** Four in a Bed. (R) **3.00** Four in a Bed. (R) **3.30** A Place in the Sun: Winter Sun. (R) **4.30** Kirstie and Phil's Love It or List It. (R) **5.35** Escape to the Chateau: DIY. (R)
6.30 Channel 4 News.
7.00 Great Canal Journeys: India. The first of two programmes in which Timothy West and Prunella Scales explore India by canal boat. The trip begins in Kerala, a region of palm-fringed lakes, rivers and British-built canals which has had a thriving spice trade for thousands of years. They explore a boat built by a local ruler and make offerings at a temple, while Pru learns a traditional dance. (R)
8.00 Film: Star Trek: Into Darkness. (2013) Premiere. Captain Kirk and the crew of the starship Enterprise are sent on a clandestine mission into enemy territory to track down the rogue starfleet agent behind a terrorist attack on Earth. However, the assignment brings to light a hidden threat from within their own organisation. Sci-fi adventure sequel, starring Chris Pine, Zachary Quinto and Benedict Cumberbatch.
10.35 Film: Maze Runner: The Scorch Trials. (2015) Premiere. A group of children who escaped from a mysterious labyrinth journey through a dangerous wasteland. Sci-fi adventure sequel, starring Dylan O'Brien and Kaya Scodelario.
1.00 Ramsay's Hotel Hell. A hotel in Minnesota where staff are on the brink of revolt. (R) **1.50** The Big Narstie Show. The grime MC presents an alternative entertainment show. (R) **2.45** Hollyoaks. Omnibus. Marnie asks Yasmine for her help with Alfie, and Fran sends Nancy a note asking her to meet her. Meanwhile, Farrah offers to help Grace out for the day at The Loft. (R) **4.50** My Kitchen Rules. Two friends and colleagues prepare a three course menu. (R) **5.45** Star Boot Sale. Richard Arnold tries to raise money for charity. (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake! **9.55** Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. **10.30** Access. **10.35** Pets Make You Laugh Out Loud. (R) **11.00** Police Interceptors. (R) **11.55** Nightmare Tenants, Slum Landlords: Revisited. (R) **12.55** Bad Tenants, Rogue Landlords. (R) **2.00** Bargain-Loving Brits in the Sun. (R) **2.55** Bargain-Loving Brits in the Sun. (R) **3.55** Rich House, Poor House. (R) **4.55** 5 News Weekend. **5.00** Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away! (R)
6.00 Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away! Gareth and Craig investigate a possible case of mistaken identity in Shropshire, then in south Wales find themselves embroiled in a bitter dispute between two dog owners over a vet's bill. Steve and Phil have to evict a distraught young family from a former high street bank in west London, before paying a call on an elderly tailor in north London. (R)
7.00 Cricket on 5. England v India. Mark Nicholas presents action from the second game in the three-match series, which took place at Lord's. With commentary by Michael Vaughan, Geoff Boycott and Alison Mitchell.
8.00 Les Dawson: A Life of Laughter. Remembering the stand-up comedian, TV host, and celebrated piano player who died in June 1993 at the age of 62. His life story is revealed by delving into the archives and piecing together the most memorable footage he committed to celluloid, and as well as digging out great performances, chat show appearances, rare and long forgotten archive and home movie footage. There are also contributions from family, friends and colleagues, all combining to unpick the stories behind this legend of British entertainment – told in his own words and by those who knew him best. (R)
10.00 Comedy Gold: Les Dawson and Friends. A selection of clips featuring the much-loved comedian.
11.20 French and Saunders: 30 Years of Laughs. A celebration of the careers of Dawn French and Jennifer Saunders, in particular their work as a double-act. Contributors include Helen Lederer and Christopher Biggins. (R)
12.15 SuperCasino. **3.10** The A-Team. (R) **4.00** GPs: Behind Closed Doors. (R) **4.45** House Doctor. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Four
7.00 Earth's Greatest Spectacles **8.00** Wonders of the Monsoon **9.00** Hidden **10.00** A Life on Screen – Stephen Fry **11.00** Roy Orbison: Love Hurts **12.00** Top of the Pops: 1986 **12.30** Smashing Hits! The 80's Pop Map of Britain & Ireland **1.30** The Girl from Ipanema: Brazil, Bossa Nova and the Beach **2.30** Wonders of the Monsoon **3.30** Top of the Pops: 1986 **4.00** Close
ITV2
12.35 Catchphrase **1.20** You've Been Framed! Gold **2.25 Film:** Peter Pan (2003) **3.35** FYI Daily **3.40 Film:** Peter Pan (2003) **4.40 Film:** Happy Feet Two (2011) **5.55** FYI Daily **6.00 Film:** Happy Feet Two (2011) **6.35 Film:** The Mummy (1999) **7.40** FYI Daily **7.45 Film:** The Mummy (1999) **9.00** Love Island: The Weekly Hot List **10.05** Keith Lemon: Coming in America **10.50** Family Guy **12.20** American Dad! **1.15** CelebAbility **2.00** Totally Bonkers Guinness World Records **2.50** Teleshopping **5.50** ITV2 Nightscreen
ITV3
2.25 ITV Racing Live from Newmarket. Coverage of today's race meetings. **4.00** Foyle's War **6.00** Rosemary & Thyme **7.00** Midsomer Murders **9.00** Endeavour **11.00** Vera **1.00** Honest **1.55** ITV3 Nightscreen **2.30** Teleshopping
ITV4
3.00 Storage Wars: Texas **4.00** Monster Carp **5.00** When English Football Ruled Europe **7.00** Tour de France Highlights **8.00** World Series of Darts: Shanghai **12.00** Better Late Than Never **12.55** Football's Foreign Legion **1.55** Stuck on You: The Football Sticker Story **2.45** ITV4 Nightscreen **3.00** Teleshopping
E4
11.00 How I Met Your Mother **12.00** The Goldbergs **1.30** Brooklyn Nine-Nine **2.30** Young Sheldon **3.00** The Big Bang Theory **9.00 Film:** Colombiana (2011) **11.05** Gogglebox **1.20** Tattoo Fixers **2.20** Rude Tube **4.05** How I Met Your Mother **4.50** Rude(ish) Tube
Film4
11.00 Vice Versa (1988) **1.00** Stuart Little 2 (2002) **2.35** Speed 2: Cruise Control (1997) **5.00** Carry On Regardless (1961) **6.55** Percy Jackson: Sea of Monsters (2013) **9.00** The Green Mile (1999) A prison guard amazed by the healing power and gentle nature of a man on death row comes to doubt his guilt. Supernatural drama, starring Tom Hanks and Michael Clarke Duncan. **12.00** Alien Resurrection (1997) **2.10** The Bay (2012) **3.55** Close

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SUNDAY'S TV JULY 15

CHOICE

Gary Lineker

MOTD Live: FIFA World Cup 2018
(BBC1, 3.50pm)
Gary Lineker presents coverage of the final (Kick-off 4.00pm), which comes from Luzhniki Stadium in Moscow, as the sport's most prestigious match takes place and the successors to Germany are crowned. The defending champions sensationally crashed out at the group stage this time around, finishing bottom of Group F following defeats to Mexico and South Korea, with their solitary victory over Sweden eventually counting for nothing. There were six previous World Cup winners who made it through to the knockout phase, however, as Uruguay, Spain, France, Argentina, Brazil and England all safely made it past their groups, though Spain and Argentina fell at the last-16 stage.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **9.00** The Andrew Marr Show. **10.00** Sunday Morning Live. **11.00** Regional Programme. **12.10** Songs of Praise. **12.45** BBC News; Weather. **1.00** Wimbledon 2018. Sue Barker presents the build-up to the men's singles final. **1.50** Wimbledon 2018. Live coverage of the men's singles final. **3.00** MOTD Live: FIFA World Cup Final Build Up. A look ahead to the final. **3.50** MOTD Live: FIFA World Cup 2018. Coverage of the final (Kick-off 4.00pm).
6.35 BBC News.
6.50 Regional Programme.
7.00 Countryfile. Sean Fletcher presents a special programme on Wales, spelling out what he loves so much about the country, including archive footage exploring the Seven Wonders of Wales. The mountains, hill farming, heritage, wildlife, castles, food and coastline of Wales are all examined, with the latter being of particular relevance as Sean journeys along Pembrokeshire's stretch of the Welsh Coastal Path.
8.00 Antiques Roadshow. Fiona Bruce presents the show from Minehead Railway Station, where items brought in for the experts to value include a chair thought to have once belonged to Henry VIII, a 19th-century washing machine, a holiday camp dance trophy, a miniature of Napoleon and a wedding dress that has been worn down the aisle by seven brides.
9.00 Poldark. Sam convinces Drake to return from exile following his abandonment of Rosina, and Nathaniel Pearce's death reveals how he embezzled Pascoe's clients' funds. Ross finds Geoffrey Charles led astray by Monk Adderley and steers his nephew from trouble, while Drake returns to the village with Sam, who threatens retribution on any who attack his brother.
10.00 BBC News.
10.20 Regional Programme.
10.30 MOTD: FIFA World Cup 2018 Highlights. Action from the final, which came from Luzhniki Stadium in Moscow.
11.00 Today at Wimbledon. Clare Balding and guests look back at highlights of the men's singles final.
12.00 MOTD: FIFA World Cup 2018 Replay. **1.45** Weather for the Week Ahead. **1.50** BBC News.

BBC2

6.00 A to Z of TV Gardening. (R) **6.45** Glorious Gardens from Above. (R) **7.30** Gardeners' World. (R) **8.30** Countryfile. (R) **9.30** Saturday Kitchen Best Bites. **11.00** Wimbledon 2018. **12.30** Coast. (R) **1.25** RAF 100: Into the Blue. **1.55** Operation Grand Canyon with Dan Snow. (R) **2.55** Wimbledon 2018. Continued live coverage from the All England Club.
8.00 Russia with Simon Reeve. The concluding leg of the adventurer's epic journey begins in Crimea, which is part of neighbouring Ukraine but was annexed by Russia in 2014. Simon meets the eccentric and fearless owner of a safari park who likes to get up close and personal with his pride of lions, then comes across a small hospital where he meets an inspirational doctor trying to protect his clinic from closure. Arriving in Moscow he meets a woman who was arrested for protesting against her flat being demolished, and finally arrives in St Petersburg, where he joins fighters at a martial arts club. Last in the series. (R)
9.00 The Misadventures of Romesh Ranganathan. The comedian tests his preconceptions of Albania, guided on a whistlestop tour of the country by local TV presenter and journalist Erjona Rusi. Along the way, he tries to discover why Albania has remained a stubbornly unfashionable holiday destination, meeting those at the extremes of the country, from the rural farmers to the billionaire playboys who live in the cities in the company of supermodels. Last in the series.
10.00 Reporting Trump's First Year: The Fourth Estate. Michael Flynn pleads guilty over lying to the FBI, and reporters dig deeper on the obstruction of justice case Robert Mueller might be building. Last in the series.
10.55 That's the Way, A-Ha, A-Ha, Joe Lycett. A performance from the comedian's award-winning live show, recorded at the Duchess Theatre in London's West End. (R)
11.55 Golf: Scottish Open. Highlights of the final round of the European Tour event at Gullane Golf Club in East Lothian, where Rafa Cabrera Bello entered as the defending champion.
12.55 Sign Zone: Question Time. (R) **1.55** Holby City. (R) **2.55** This Is BBC Two.

ITV

6.00 CITV: Sooty. **6.10** Grizzly Tales for Gruesome Kids. (R) **6.20** Grizzly Tales for Gruesome Kids. (R) **6.35** Dino Dana. (R) **6.50** Mission Employable. (R) **6.55** The Oddbods Show. (R) **7.05** NinjaGo: Tournament of Elements. (R) **7.30** The Haunted Hathaways. (R) **7.55** Drop Dead Weird. **8.25** ITV News. **8.30** Zoe Ball on Sunday. **9.25** Japandemonium. (R) **9.55** The Voice Kids. (R) **11.25** Midsomer Murders. (R) **1.25** ITV News; Weather. **1.30** You've Been Framed! Gold. (R) **2.00** The Chase. (R) **2.55** FIFA World Cup 2018: Final Build Up. A look ahead to the 21st staging of the showpiece match. **3.45** FIFA World Cup 2018. Mark Pougatch presents coverage of the final (Kick-off 4.00pm).
6.30 Paul O'Grady: For the Love of Dogs. Paul and the staff try an unconventional technique to calm down an over-excited mongrel, and a young German shepherd turns out to have hidden health problems. (R)
7.00 ITV News; Weather.
7.15 Regional Programme; Weather.
7.30 The Voice Kids. Emma Willis presents the junior version of the singing talent contest, giving youngsters between the ages of seven and 14 a chance to achieve stardom. The Voice UK's Will.i.am returns as one of the three coaches, with McFly's Danny Jones and pop star Pixie Lott occupying the other two spinning red chairs. Up for grabs this time is a £30,000 prize to contribute to the winning child's musical education, along with a family holiday to Disneyland Paris.
9.00 Unforgotten. New series. The body of a teenage girl who went missing at the turn of the millennium is found at a building site off the M1.
10.00 ITV News; Weather.
10.15 Rising Damp Forever. Part one of two. Documentary about the classic sitcom, featuring contributions from creator Eric Chappell and star Don Warrington, who revisit the studio where the show was filmed. (R)
11.15 Rising Damp Forever. Part two of two. The crew of the sitcom and star Don Warrington are reunited, while director Joe McGrath and actor Christopher Strauli discuss making the movie version. (R)
12.15 The Big Fish Off. (R) **1.10** Jackpot247. **3.00** Motorsport UK. (R)

CHANNEL 4

6.10 The King of Queens. (R) **6.35** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **7.00** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **7.25** Frasier. (R) **7.55** Frasier. (R) **8.25** Bake Off: The Professionals. (R) **9.30** Sunday Brunch. **12.30** The Simpsons. (R) **1.00** The Simpsons. (R) **1.25** The Simpsons. (R) **1.55 Film:** A Monster in Paris. (2011) Animated comedy, with the voice of Vanessa Paradis. **3.40** Location, Location, Location. (R) **4.40** Kirstie and Phil's Love It or List It. (R) **5.40** The Secret Life of the Zoo. (R)
6.40 Channel 4 News.
7.00 George Clarke's Amazing Spaces. In this treehouse special, George rediscovers some of the best tiny builds to be found up in the treetops across the world, including a romantic retreat in Tuscany, a tree hotel in Sweden shaped like a UFO and a treehouse designed like a mirrored cube. Plus, a look back at the epic treehouse George and master carpenter Will Hardie built together in Kielder Forest Park.
8.00 Dunkirk: The Forgotten Heroes. The untold story of what happened after the Dunkirk evacuation, told by the men who were there and using recently declassified secret documents. Following the evacuation, tens of thousands of British troops were still left in France, fighting for their lives. The 51st Highland Division were ordered to fight on against the Hitler's war machine and now, almost 80 years later, the only remaining survivors of that Division tell their extraordinary story for the first time.
9.00 The Handmaid's Tale. The Waterfords embark on a diplomatic trip abroad, and Serena Joy faces the temptation of life outside Gilead. Luke and Moira grapple with survivor's guilt, while Offred seeks support from allies.
10.15 Film: Hell or High Water. (2016) Premiere. A divorced father and his ex-con older brother resort to a desperate scheme in order to save their family's ranch in West Texas. Drama, starring Jeff Bridges.
12.15 The Last Leg. A comic review of the past seven days. (R) **1.10** News Crack. (R) **1.35 Film:** Wuthering Heights. (2011) Period drama, starring James Howson. **3.50** Mobil 1: The Grid. (R) **4.20** My Kitchen Rules. (R) **5.15** Kirstie's Vintage Gems. (R) **5.35** Star Boot Sale. (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake!: Little Princess. **6.10** Wissper. (R) **6.20** Poppy Cat. (R) **6.30** Milkshake! Monkey. (R) **6.35** The Secret Life of Puppies. (R) **6.40** Seaside Antics. (R) **6.45** Olly the Little White Van. (R) **6.50** Simon. (R) **7.00** Peppa Pig. (R) **7.05** Paw Patrol. (R) **7.15** Thomas & Friends. (R) **7.30** Fireman Sam. (R) **7.50** Rusty Rivets. (R) **7.55** Paw Patrol. (R) **8.15** Pirata & Capitano. **8.35** Noddy: Toyland Detective. (R) **8.50** Floogals. (R) **9.00** Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom. (R) **9.10** Shimmer and Shine. (R) **9.30** Digby Dragon. (R) **9.45** Peppa Pig. (R) **9.55** Peppa Pig. (R) **10.00** Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. **10.35** FIA Formula E. **11.20** Police Interceptors. (R) **12.10** Police Interceptors. (R) **1.10** Police Interceptors. (R) **2.10** Police Interceptors. (R) **3.10** Windsor Castle: The Queen's Favourite Home – Part One. (R) **4.10** Windsor Castle: The Queen's Favourite Home – Part Two. (R) **5.05** St Paul's: Secrets of the Great Cathedral. (R)
6.00 Westminster Abbey: Inside Britain's Most Famous Church. Cameras look inside the 11th-century church, that has been the final resting place for 17 monarchs and hosted 16 royal weddings, including the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge's. (R)
6.55 Titanic: Draining the Wreck. Using comprehensive mapping data, this programme follows the most dynamic and comprehensive look at Titanic to date, observing the creation of a 3D map of the ship's remains. (R)
7.55 Deep-Sea Super Predator. Documentary about a mysterious super-predator so large and aggressive that it can hunt down and devour a three-metre-long great white shark. (R)
8.55 5 News Weekend.
9.00 Film: Wrath of the Titans. (2012) Ancient Greek demi-god Perseus must defeat a race of monsters that have escaped from the underworld. Fantasy adventure sequel, starring Sam Worthington and Liam Neeson.
10.05 5 News Update.
10.10 Film: Wrath of the Titans. (2012) Concluded.
11.05 Film: The Legend of Hercules. (2014) Mythological adventure, starring Kellan Lutz.
12.05 Access. **12.10 Film:** The Legend of Hercules. (2014) Concluded. **12.55** SuperCasino. **3.10** The A-Team. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Four
7.00 Secret Knowledge: Stradivarius and Me **7.30** BBC Proms 2018 **10.00** Ben & James Versus the Arabian Desert **11.00** Six Wives with Lucy Worsley **12.00** The Art That Made Mexico: Paradise, Power and Prayers **1.00** David Starkey's Music & Monarchy **2.00** Peter York's Hipster Handbook **3.00** Ben & James Versus the Arabian Desert **4.00** Close
ITV2
11.50 Take Me Out **1.00** You've Been Framed! Gold **2.00 Film:** You've Got Mail (1998) **3.00** FYI Daily **3.05 Film:** You've Got Mail (1998) **4.20 Film:** Mamma Mia! Sing-along (2008) **5.25** FYI Daily **5.30 Film:** Mamma Mia! Sing-along (2008) **6.30 Film:** The Mummy Returns (2001) **7.30** FYI Daily **7.35 Film:** The Mummy Returns (2001) **9.00** Love Island **10.00** Love Island: Aftersun **11.05** Family Guy **12.35** American Dad! **1.35** CelebAbility **2.20** Teleshopping **5.50** ITV2 Nightscreen
ITV3
7.00 Victoria **9.00** Elton John: The Nation's Favourite Song **10.35** Wire in the Blood **12.30** Blue Murder **1.55** Liverpool 1 **2.50** Road to Avonlea **4.35** Judge Judy **5.40** ITV3 Nightscreen
ITV4
11.00 Storage Wars: Texas **11.30** Tour de France Live. Coverage of stage nine of the Grand Tour event. **3.30** River Monsters **4.30** Storage Wars: Texas **5.55** The Chase Celebrity Special **7.00** Tour de France Highlights **8.00** River Monsters **9.00 Film:** Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy (2011) **10.00** FYI Daily **10.05 Film:** Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy (2011) **11.35 Film:** Harry Brown (2009) **12.35** FYI Daily **12.40 Film:** Harry Brown (2009) **1.45** The Motorbike Show **2.40** ITV4 Nightscreen **3.00** Teleshopping
E4
11.20 The Big Bang Theory: Big Moments **4.50** The Big Bang Theory **5.15** The Big Bang Theory: Big Moments **5.40** The Crystal Maze: Celebrity Special **6.45 Film:** Thor (2011) **9.00** Marvel's Agents of SHIELD **10.00** Gogglebox **11.05** Gogglebox Australia **12.10** The Big Bang Theory **1.05** Brooklyn Nine-Nine **1.35** Marvel's Agents of SHIELD **2.25** Gogglebox Australia **3.15** Hollyoaks
Film4
11.00 Tora! Tora! Tora! (1970) **2.00** Back to the Future (1985) **4.20** Back to the Future Part II (1989) **6.30** Back to the Future Part III (1990) **9.00** The Take (2016) **10.45** Abraham Lincoln: Vampire Hunter (2012) **12.50** The Place Beyond the Pines (2012) **3.40** Close

N022
25% Off valid on Irish Sea cruise ferry and Dublin Swift sailings up to 18 December 2018. Excludes following July & August sailings: Swift 11:30 & 14:15 and Epsilon 14:30 and 08:30 (Sat only). Must be booked online and 48 hours in advance of travel and by midnight Thursday 12 July 2018. New bookings only. Subject to availability. Not available in conjunction with any other offer or promotion including Tesco travel tokens. Standard terms and conditions of booking and travel apply. See irishferries.com for details.

PICK OF THE WEEK

FILM CHOICES

MONDAY
Site Unseen: An Emma Fielding Mystery, Channel 5, 3.15pm
Premiere. An archaeologist and her team are embroiled in a murder investigation when a dead body is found at their dig site. Whodunit, starring Courtney Thorne-Smith. (2017)

TUESDAY
A Teacher's Obsession, Channel 5, 3.20pm
A lacrosse star is kicked off the team until she can improve her grades, leading to a new teacher taking a disturbing interest in her. Thriller, starring Molly Hagan. Edited for daytime broadcast. (2015)

WEDNESDAY
Mama, Channel 4, 1am
A man takes in his two nieces, who have been left to fend for themselves for years in a forest after their parents' deaths. He and his girlfriend try to give the almost animalistic children a normal life, unaware that a supernatural force that looked after the girls in the wild has followed them home. Horror, starring Jessica Chastain and Nikolaj Coster-Waldau. (2013)

Crank, Friday, ITV, 10.45pm

THURSDAY
Two Wrongs, Channel 5, 3.20pm
Nurse and single mother Sarah struggles to balance her work and home life, but her worst nightmare is realised when her daughter Lauren is abducted while walking home alone from school and she faces a moral dilemma if she is to save her child. Thriller, starring Gillian Zinser, Ryan Blakely, Brooklyn Lax and Aidan Devine. (2015)

FRIDAY
Crank, ITV, 10.45pm
An assassin faces a race against time when he learns a rival has poisoned him with a drug that will kill him if his heart rate drops below a certain level. As he sets out to take revenge on his enemies, he has to resort to increasingly desperate acts to keep his adrenaline pumping. Action thriller, with Jason Statham, Amy Smart, Jose Pablo Cantillo, Efren Ramirez, Dwight Yoakam, Carlos Sanz, Reno Wilson and Jay Xcala. (2006)

Nadiya serves up a tasty treat with her favourite dishes

Believe it or not, there was a time when cooking shows just didn't matter.

They were cosy time-fillers that propped up the schedules while we waited for the likes of Top of the Pops, Tomorrow's World and super soaps like Dallas and Dynasty.

But then things changed. Yes, the humble cookery show was still cheap to make (a staple ingredient for any cash-conscious producer), but with the right person, or people doing their bit to cameras, it could be the stuff of TV gold.

Thanks to mavericks like Keith Floyd, who berated his producer and essentially directed the show himself inbetween glugs of wine, the nation realised cookery shows could be fun.

Yes, Delia Smith might be there like a stable rock with top cooking tips, but Floyd was a culinary rock star, who just happened to look like an eccentric professor.

Fast forward to 2018 and we have more cookery shows than we can shake a (chop) stick at. Every type of series, with a vast array of larger-than-life presenters, who travel the world and carry out cooking sketches in exotic locations while we at home dream mournfully over beans on toast.

One of the greatest finds of recent years is of course Nadiya Hussain, the Great British Bake Off winner whose bright ideas, offbeat sense of humour and magnetic screen presence ensured her fanbase grew faster than a proving loaf with too much yeast.

In the past three years since she became a household name, the 33-year-old Leeds mum of three has fronted compelling travel show The Chronicles of Nadiya; co-hosted The Big Family Cooking Showdown; helped edit the BBC's Good Food magazine; written a weekly broadsheet column, and is now back on the box with this lip-smacking new series.

She'll be showing viewers how to create the perfect dishes to compliment any kind of day, and meets some of Britain's most inspiring home cooks along the way.

Nadiya begins by demonstrating recipes for family days out, including chai-spiced vermicelli, cheese biscuits with tomato jam, a filling samosa pie, as well as a prawn saffron biryani to come home to.

Though you can of course add plenty of butter and full-fat milk to certain dishes, Nadiya is well aware that most of us are fighting the battle of the bulge, so she offers lighter alternatives.

Her quest to find the best homemade pasty in Britain takes her to Cornwall, and she also visits a rapeseed-oil farm in Northampton.

"For me, food is all about family, and those special moments when we all come together over a mouthwatering meal," explains Nadiya.

"I want to share some of my yummy family favourites. Dishes for every kind of day. I'm also going to travel the country, meeting inspirational home cooks who go the extra mile to make scrumptious products that most of us buy in the shops."

Nadiya's Family Favourites, Monday, BBC2, 8pm

BEST OF THE REST

MONDAY
The Island That Saved My Life
BBC1, 7.30pm
Suffering from depression and with an accompanying trait of shyness, 23-year-old Sarah Moore found her life in Edinburgh tough. She found a solution, however - even though it meant leaving her family, she moved to the remote Orcadian island of North Ronaldsay, which boasts a population of around 50. There, she took up several jobs, and started to build a new life for herself; one which suited her down to the ground. Now, much happier in the beautiful surroundings of the Orkney Isles, she feels much more a member of the community - and, ironically, has a far more active social life than she did in the Scottish capital. This documentary, part of BBC One's Our Lives strand, tells her remarkable story.

TUESDAY
Inside the Factory
BBC2, 8pm
For millions of us, getting through the day without a coffee or three is an unthinkable prospect, but what goes into making the stuff? In the first of a new run, Gregg Wallace explores an enormous Derbyshire coffee factory, where they produce 175,000 jars a day. He follows the production of freeze-dried instant coffee, from the arrival of 27 tonnes of Brazilian green coffee beans right through to dispatch. Meanwhile, Cherry Healey learns about the drink's chemistry and Ruth Goodman investigates its origins, visiting the site of the UK's first coffee house which sprang up in a London churchyard in 1652.

WEDNESDAY
Animals Behaving Badly
BBC1, 8pm
A new three-part series from the BBC - and let's face it, who does animal docs better? - focuses on the science behind animal behaviour. While it may have a fun and often adorable veneer, it also sneaks in a bit of science along the way. The first episode focuses on mating, and frankly some of these critters have habits which we may find distasteful to say the least. Presenter Liz Bonnin reveals how mongoose are apt to start turf wars simply to create a distraction in order to sneak in and mate; macaques meanwhile will actually kidnap babies in order to curry favour with rivals. Meanwhile, in the American plains, she finds out why promiscuity might be the key to healthy offspring - in prairie dogs, at least.

THURSDAY
George Clarke's Old House, New Home
Channel 4, 8pm
New series. Architect George Clarke returns to unlock the potential of old houses. He meets teachers Simon and Sofie, whose 1930s Liverpool semi has lost its way thanks to a small kitchen squeezed into what would have been the wash house and some dodgy interior design choices made by the previous owner. Can he come up with a structural redesign and interior scheme with just £15,000? He also visits a medieval farmhouse in Kent that's like a perfectly preserved time capsule and needs an upgrade suitable for a young and rapidly growing family.

Our Shirley Valentine Summer, Thursday, ITV, 9.30pm

Our Shirley Valentine Summer
ITV, 9.30pm
The play (and subsequent movie) Shirley Valentine told the story of a bored housewife who found a new lease of life when she went to Greece on holiday. But could a trip to the Greek islands work have a similar effect on a group of female celebrities who feel they have reached a crossroads in their own lives? Melinda Messenger, Sian Lloyd, Nancy Dell'Olio, Aggie MacKenzie, Ninia Benjamin, Lizzie Cundy, Annabel Giles, and Ingrid Tarrant are all single and all have a personal goal in mind, whether it's boosting their confidence, getting over a marriage breakdown or finding a new career. Some of them are also hoping to find love. But can they discover what they are looking for in the Greek islands – and will the fact that they all want to try something new bond them as they find themselves living under the same roof?

FRIDAY
Golf: The Open Championship Highlights
BBC2, 8pm
Eilidh Barbour presents action from the second day of the prestigious event, which takes place at Carnoustie Golf Links in Angus, Scotland, as the players aimed to make the cut ahead of the weekend's play.

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BRAIN GYM

No.488

Codeword

Each number in the grid represents a different letter of the alphabet and every letter of the alphabet is used. Use the given letter(s) to the right of the main grid to start you off.

18	23	5	10	21	7	■	11	12	19	16	25	7
■	25	■	24	■	12	■	16	■	24	■	■	9
■	19	■	9	8	25	24	1	1	12	6	19	24
22	9	15	15	■	25	■	16	■	4	■	■	19
■	20	■	18	■	24	■	15	■	24	■	■	2
■	17	3	12	2	2	19	24	■	15	9	14	24
22	■	18	■	■	■	16	■	■	■	20	■	21
9	2	16	19	■	8	16	19	19	23	15	1	■
5	■	■	16	■	12	■	9	■	5	■	21 R	■
10	■	■	12	■	17	■	13	■	15	19	23 U	8
2	9	15	17	21	9	6	23	17	24	■	8	■
16	■	■	18	■	5	■	16	■	12	■	6	■
8	9	26	24	21	15	■	21	24	19	9	15	18

1	14
2	15
3	16
4	17
5	18
6	19
7	20
8	21 R
9	22
10	23 U
11	24
12	25
13	26

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
X	W	S	C	D	V	Q	N	O	F	Y	J	G
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
H	L	I	B	Z	T	R	K	M	P	E	A	U

Double Crossword

Choose either quick or cryptic clues – both fit the same grid.

Cryptic Clues:

Across

4. On air journey, youth leader becomes giddy (7)
8. Sport in the packaging department? (6)
9. To carve ham (7)
10. Indicates letters used in incantations (6)
11. Give ear to silent reform (6)
12. Letter used in the manner of a buccaneer (8)
18. Defer mail open to change (8)
20. Producer of electricity from Monday (6)
21. Trivial insult (6)
22. Thus, being lawful, make an appeal (7)
23. Be relevant to animal appearing (4,2)
24. Stuck in this place with a theologian around (7)

Down

1. Lamb, say, is extremely bad (7)
2. Right in leaving out selected passage (7)
3. Horn learnt badly (6)
5. Cut down on affection, receiving none at all (8)
6. Has rig-out which is showy (6)
7. Marked correct time? (6)
13. Suitable to place in monkey (8)
14. Fake produced by a blacksmith? (7)
15. Giving permission for hiring (7)
16. Verbal saying? (6)
17. Salty South African class of goods (6)
19. Agriculturalist at the helm? (6)

1	■	2	■	3	■	4	5		6		7	
8						■		■		■		■
	■		■		■	9						
10						■		■		■		■
	■		■		■	■	11					
12					13			■		■		■
	■		■	■		■		■	■	14	■	15
■	16	■	17	■	18			19				
20						■	■		■		■	
■		■		■		■	21					
22							■		■		■	
■		■		■		■	23					
24							■		■		■	

Quick Clues:

Across

4. Relief (7)
8. Eatable (6)
9. Competent (7)
10. Annul (6)
11. Sting (6)
12. Courageous (8)
18. Upset (8)
20. Seemly (6)
21. Treat (6)
22. Chief city (7)
23. Glimpse (6)
24. Under (7)

Down

1. Chorus (7)
2. Contend (7)
3. Gratify (6)
5. Rouse (8)
6. Courteous (6)
7. Threefold (6)
13. Lengthen (8)
14. Sweet dish (7)
15. Whole number (7)
16. Ten years (6)
17. Contrivance (6)
19. Indeed (6)

Sudoku

					2		1	
	2		1			5		6
8	1		7		6			
7			8					
	4	8		1		6	2	
		1		7	3			9
			5		9		3	
4	7	5			1		8	
			2	8				5

Fill in the grid above so that every column, every row and each of the 3x3 boxes contains all the digits from 1 to 9.

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS >

5	7	3	4	8	6	9	2	1
8	4	9	3	1	2	6	5	7
6	2	1	9	5	7	4	8	3
4	6	2	1	3	9	5	7	8
9	1	5	6	7	8	3	4	2
3	8	7	2	4	5	1	6	9
7	9	4	8	6	3	2	1	5
2	5	6	7	9	1	8	3	4
1	3	8	5	2	4	7	9	6

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS: CRYPTIC - Across: 1 Good spirits; 9 Eat; 10 Allotment; 11 Press; 13 Cynical; 14 Needle; 16 Senate; 18 Opulent; 19 Lathe; 20 China clay; 21 Act; 22 Leading role. Down: 2 Out; 3 Draws; 4 Palace; 5 Retinue; 6 Trenchant; 7 Keep in touch; 8 At all events; 12 Executive; 15 Leeward; 17 Stolen; 19 Layer; 21 Awl. QUICK - Across: 1 Domesticity; 9 And; 10 Insensate; 11 Lapse; 13 Leaders; 14 Braise; 16 Animal; 18 Lineage; 19 Minus; 20 Trickster; 21 All; 22 Celebration. Down: 2 Odd; 3 Elite; 4 Tussle; 5 Contain; 6 Tradesman; 7 Fallibility; 8 Senselessly; 12 Plaintive; 15 Shackle; 17 Better; 19 Merit; 21 Ado.

Quiz

1. Who is Frank Richards' most famous creation?
2. With which disease is oncology concerned?
3. Which unit of distance is 1.852 km long?
4. Who wrote the foreword for the surprise best-seller The Catechism?
5. Which Australian PM was nicknamed 'the Prefect'?
6. In which country is the IJsselmeer lake?
7. Which violinist was often acccompanied by his sister Hephzibah?
8. Who wrote The Bostonians?
9. Who plays Gilderoy Lockhart in the movie Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets?
10. In which county is the seaside resort Herne Bay?

Last week's solutions:

Quiz: 1 Elbrus; 2 Science fiction; 3 Order of the Garter; 4 Sherry; 5 Lead; 6 Diana Rigg; 7 Benjamin; 8 Mary Pierce; 9 Indian; 10 FBI.

Niner: CONSTABLE

Niner

Each number from 1 to 9 represents a different letter. Solve the clues and insert the letters in the appropriate squares to discover a word which uses all nine letters.

1899 gives a disturbance,
2675 gives a second disturbance,
163947 gives a disaster.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

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Red Lion the mane attraction

Being new in town means it's not always easy to show initiative when it comes to going out. You don't know the area and have no knowledge of any decent places to eat or drink out at.

But it was clear that a country pub was to be the destination on a summer's evening.

An escape from the city hell on a hot day in the office.

The Red Lion at Bradley is a pretty little pub in a proper, picturesque English setting. The white-washed walls of the 17th century building and perfect flower borders look totally in character for its village setting.

Driving up to the pub it was easy to feel all the stresses and strains of the day slip away and be replaced with calm and tranquillity.

SWIFTLY

When Mr and I wandered in to the pub, it caught us a little off guard as all eyes appeared to be on the strangers from another land.

As we we were the first in for dinner, it meant we got our pick of the tables and The Husband – who is a little particular about where we sit – made a beeline for the table I had my eyes on. A window seat for two tucked away from other diners. We did have to shuffle the table, however, as Husband had parked himself right under a speaker.

The waitress was very smiley and gave us menus to deliberate over and took a drinks order, a Birra Moretti and Pinot Grigio. They arrived with a bottle of chilled water, the order was taken and we relaxed into our peaceful surrounds before our starters. I'd gone for the soup of the day – French onion with a crusty roll and he fancied the warm garlic and rosemary focaccia with aged balsamic, olive oil with the idea of sharing. The soup was amazing, full of oniony flavour with gorgeous chunks of the veg thickening up the hearty liquid. The best bit was the huge French bread crouton covered in melted cheese floating on top. There was no crusty roll but we did have the bread starter, a large portion of four pieces of focaccia full of rosemary. The olive oil and balsamic vinegar were of a high quality and the herby bread a great complement to the oil and vinegar mix.

Nothing was left of the starters and we sat back waiting for them to settle as we admired the serene surroundings. By the time our mains arrived the dining room had begun to fill up a little. I'd gone for a pub classic – fish and chips – but instead of the usual cod it was battered haddock with chips, tartare sauce and minted mushy peas, which ordinarly I would not be keen on, but these were delicious.

The chicken was going down just as well over the other side of the table and, I am assured, the whole meal was rated as 'top drawer'.

I was defeated and couldn't finish it all. His plate was cleared and our bellies were happily full.

Husband was keen to sample a dessert but I was too stuffed to even contemplate such a thing. Sticky toffee pudding with ginger ice cream was his choice. But with two spoons, so I could tuck in too. It was well worth finding the tiny bit of room my tummy had left. I'm pretty sure I ended up devouring the majority of it too.

Our bill came to £53.20 with no complaints and such lovely, friendly service.

It's a place we'd happily return to. Out of the way, quiet and with satisfying food, The Red Lion is surely the mane attraction in the pretty village of Bradley.

LISA HARRISON

The Red Lion pub in Bradley, near Stafford

Fish and chips with minted mushy peas

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The Tina Turner Musical

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ABTA

PROPERTY

YOUR WEEKLY GUIDE TO HOME BUYING AND LETTING

Unique extended property is going up for auction

An individual property with extended and unique accommodation, 35 Burton Road, Dudley, has ample parking to the rear.

Being for sale through the modern method of auction, through Skitts Estate Agents, it has a guide price of £80,000 with no chain. The modern method of auction is not to be confused with traditional auction, and is a flexible buyer friendly method of purchase.

This three-bedroom end terraced has been well-maintained and benefits from central heating and double glazing.

Thought to be an ideal investment opportunity, this impressive property is situated in a popular residential area local to amenities including shops, schools, public transport services and is a short distance from Dudley and Sedgley town centres.

In more detail the living room has a front door, electric fire with marble type feature fireplace and laminate flooring. The dining room has a brick fireplace, an under stairs cupboard and stairs off.

A side room has ceiling spot lights, double glazed sliding doors leading out and a storage cupboard housing a combination boiler. There is also a side area, which is a former shop area. An inner hallway has a side entrance door.

The kitchen has a stainless steel sink top with fitted base units and decorative laminate work tops, a built-in oven with a four-ring electric hob. There is a range of fitted wall cupboards and a door to the rear garden. There is a downstairs shower room with a white suite.

Upstairs, bedroom one has a range of fitted wardrobes, and there are two further bedrooms.

The rear garden is enclosed and private. There is a tarmacadam area for parking, a patio area and gated side access. A further paved area to the rear provides extra parking and there is a brick-built garage.

DUDLEY £80,000

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- Individual property
- Extended and unique
- Three bedrooms
- Ample parking to rear

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Extended semi-detached with four bedrooms

KINVER
£314,950

A fabulous extended, four-bedroomed semi-detached house in an elevated position, Willow Bank in Edge View Walk, Kinver, is located just off White Hill.

Having views of Kinver Edge, making it the perfect family home, it is for sale through Davies, White & Perry at £314,950. Deceptively spacious with flexible accommodation, it has undergone re-modernisation throughout.

It has three reception rooms including a lounge, spacious entrance hall leading through to an open plan dining area, and a study/play room/bedroom five. The breakfast kitchen has appliances and there is also a utility and downstairs WC to the ground floor.

Contact Davies White & Perry on 01952 811003.

A substantial detached with five bedrooms in popular spot

WALL HEATH
£425,000 <<<

An immaculate and very substantial detached family home in Albion Street, Wall Heath, lies within this extremely sought-after area within the heart of Wall Heath village.

Having incredibly spacious, luxury appointed accommodation which is 'ready to move into', it is for sale through Taylors Estate Agents at £425,000.

Its accommodation briefly comprises a reception hall, a ground floor WC, a lounge, a separate formal dining room, a very large, beautifully appointed dining kitchen, separate utility room, five good-sized bedrooms (master with luxury en-suite shower room), well-appointed house bathroom, gas central heating and double glazing.

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SEDGLEY, Dudley Road

AN INCREDIBLY SPACIOUS, TREMENDOUSLY extended, (rear & side) family home within level walking distance of the Bull Ring, park, Doctors Surgery etc. With porch, imposing hall, 33 ft through living room,. separate playroom/tv room, store, 17'2" extended kitchen, lobby, separate w.c. FOUR BEDROOMS, bathroom. Delightful sheltered garden, EPC: E SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £199,950

LOWER GORNAL, Manderston Close

Situated on the periphery of Milking Bank neighbourhood, an exceptionally stylish, gas centrally heated, double glazed, significantly enhanced "Mews style" property comprising; hall, store, cloakroom, through living room with living flame feature fireplace, dining room, fitted kitchen,CONSERVATORY. Three bedrooms with shower room en-suite & built in wardrobe to master bedroom, bathroom. GARAGE with utility, and additional parking, secluded rear garden. VIEWING ESSENTIAL. EPC: TBA SEDGLEY.

Offers in the region of £184,950

WALL HEATH, Cross Street

A LARGE and SUPERBLY PRESENTED DETACHED FAMILY HOME which is within walking distance from village shops/ sought after schools, offering a GENEROUS layout, including a LARGE CONSERVATORY and FOUR GOOD BEDROOMS with EN SUITE With BLOCK PAVED DRIVEWAY, GARAGE and a sunny rear garden. EPC D

£329,950

COSELEY, Clifton Street, Hurst Hill

OUTSTANDING, spacious, 'landmark' family residence (on 3 floors) overlooking open aspect comprising; hall, magnificent 26'5" through living/dining room (with multi-fuel stove), 21'6" CONSERVATORY, first quality 17 ft kitchen, utility room, cloakroom. Three double bedrooms (principal bedroom with shower room en suite), house bathroom. 25'2" fourth bedroom. Gardens, parking. EPC:C SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £320,000

SEDGLEY, Gate Street

A truly Wonderful traditional DETACHED family home and COACH HOUSE, located within walking distance of Sedgley village and other amenities. Benefiting from being gas centrally heated and double glazed, this fantastic property also boasts entrance porch, impressive hallway, living room, dining room, breakfast-kitchen, utility, guest W/C, THREE BEDROOMS, family bathroom, garage and parking to front with stunning enclosed rear garden. EPC Rating D SEDGLEY.

Offers in the region of £309,950

KINGSWINFORD, Maidendale Road

An INCREDIBLY DECEPTIVE DETACHED SPLIT LEVEL HOUSE which commands outstanding elevated views, close to desirable schools, offering an EXTENDED and IMMACULATELY PRESENTED layout with conservatory and THREE BEDROOMS. With BROAD DRIVEWAY, GARAGE/STORE and a BEAUTIFULLY LANDSCAPED private garden. EPC D

£273,950

DUDLEY, Oakham Road

NO UPWARD CHAIN. Occupying a corner position on the sought after Oakham Road, this wonderfully presented DETACHED family home has lots to offer. As well as having gas central heating & double glazing, this property also boasts; porch, hall, living room, dining room, kitchen, utility, refitted ground floor shower room, THREE BEDROOMS, bathroom, garage, garden, driveway & garden to front. EPC: D SEDGLEY.

New price WAS £244,950, NOW £239,950

WALL HEATH, Barton Lane

An OUTSTANDING SEMI DETACHED BUNGALOW within a sought after cul de sac, offering a RECENTLY and EXPENSIVELY IMPROVED layout, including TWO DOUBLE BEDROOMS. Set beyond the LARGE BLOCK PAVED DRIVEWAY with GARAGE and a level attractively laid out rear garden. EPC C

£239,950

BILSTON, Elwells Close, Sedgmoor Park

RARE OPPORTUNITY! Conscientiously maintained & improved, Freehold, gas centrally heated, double glazed detached family home in cul–de-sac briefly comprising; hall, lounge, dining room (with double patio doors to garden), enlarged/upgraded 15'10" breakfast kitchen, pantry, cloakroom, and former garage utilised as a store/playroom. Principal bedroom with wardrobe & shower room en suite, three further bedrooms, bathroom. Garden. EPC: D SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £236,000

NR. SEDGLEY, Charles Hayward Drive

OVERLOOKING FIELDS! Stylish & spacious, gas centrally heated, double glazed semi detached on periphery of development abutting onto & overlooking countryside comprising; hallway, 17'9" lounge, dining kitchen (French doors out to garden), cloakroom. Two double bedrooms, bathroom & to 2nd floor a Magnificent bedroom with shower room en suite. garden, car port, additional parking. EPC: C SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £210,000

KINGSWINFORD, Rokewood Close

Conveniently placed for SCHOOLS in High Regard, is this WELL ARRANGED, SEMI-DETACHED HOME which comprises: Lounge, Dining Room, Fitted Kitchen, Three First Floor Bedrooms, Bathroom, Driveway, Garage & Pleasant Rear Garden. EPC D

No upward chain £185,000

SEDGLEY, Gate Street

Situated within walking distance of Sedgley centre and other local amenities, this fantastically presented family home has so much to offer. Benefiting from gas central heating and double glazing, this conscientiously maintained semi-detached also boasts; porch, hall, living room, kitchen-diner, utility, guest W/C, conservatory, THREE BEDROOMS, family bathroom, garage, driveway to front and attractive enclosed rear garden. VIEWING ESSENTIAL. EPC Rating D. SEDGLEY.

Offers in the region of £179,950

LOWER GORNAL, Ruiton Street

Gas centrally heated UPVC double glazed end 'starter home' with CONSERVATORY. The property includes lounge, inner hallway, fitted cloak, store, breakfast kitchen, conservatory; two double bedrooms, bathroom, delightful sheltered/secluded landscaped gardens. LARGE BRICK GARAGE with gated access. EPC Rating C SEDGLEY.

Offers in the region of £147,000

SEDGLEY, Lime Road

COMPREHENSIVELY MODERNISED/REFURBISHED in recent months, carpeted & re-decorated throughout etc.; a 'ready to move into' starter home in popular district comprising; entrance porch, reception hall, store, lounge with bay, stunning through 'hub of the house' dining kitchen, utility section, lobbies, store & w.c. THREE BEDROOMS, reappointed bathroom. gardens. EPC: D SEDGLEY

New price WAS £149,500, NOW £145,000

COSELEY, Upper Ettingshall Road

NO UPWARD CHAIN. Located in a popular area a wonderfully presented, stylish semi-detached property ideally suited to the first time buyer. With gas central heating and double glazing, this TWO BEDROOM home also benefits from hall, living room, attractive kitchen-diner, guest W/C / Utility room, stunning bathroom, enclosed rear garden with driveway for multiple vehicles to front. EPC: D SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £144,950

SEDGLEY, Sandyfields Road

Re-furbished, re-decorated, & re-carpeted, Upvc double glazed, heated, GROUND FLOOR, apartment within reasonable distance of so many day-to-day amenities/country park/bus routes etc. The superb accommodation provides; entrance vestibule, lounge, upgraded kitchen, inner hallway, TWO BEDROOMS, reappointed bathroom. Allocated/sheltered rear garden and GARAGE. EPC: D SEDGLEY

New price WAS £120,000, NOW £115,000

TIPTON, Kingfisher House, Kingfisher Way

NO UPWARD CHAIN. A superbly presented, canal-side modern 1st floor apartment within walking distance of Tipton village, bus links, Tipton Train Station and other local amenities. Along with gas central heating and double glazing this fantastically appointed TWO BEDROOM property also boasts entrance hall, hallway, good-sized lounge-diner, fitted-kitchen, bathroom, allocated parking. EPC: TBA SEDGLEY

Price: £44,950 for 50% share

Three-bed house on a corner plot has no chain

DUDLEY
£150,000

This three-bedroomed semi-detached house in Douglas Road, Dudley, lies on a corner plot and has a large garden to the rear.

It is for sale through Trinity Property at £150,000 with no chain.

Its accommodation briefly comprises an entrance hallway, a lounge, kitchen, rear reception room, a wet room/WC, house bathroom and three bedrooms, which include two doubles and a single.

Outside the large garden has a patio area and is partially lawned.

Of the three bedrooms, one and two have built-in wardrobes.

Contact Trinity Property on 01384 213395.

Spacious home benefits from large sunny garden

WORDSLEY
£337,500 <<<

Coming with a very large, level and sunny rear garden, 105 Barnett Lane in Wordsley, is spacious.

It is for sale through Taylors Estate Agents at £337,500. It has a through reception hall, a huge lounge with a log burner through to a dining room with a walk-in bay window, a large conservatory overlooking the superb rear garden, a re-fitted family kitchen with appliances and breakfast room off, a utility room, ground floor WC, playroom, three good-sized bedrooms (the master bedroom having an en-suite shower room), a refitted house bathroom and stairs to excellent decorated loft space with a roof window. The property is further complemented by the full width driveway which provides ample off-road parking.

Contact Taylors Estate Agents on 01384 401777.

Wakeman

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27 DUDLEY ROAD, SEDGLEY — O/A £649,950
- Exceptional individual detached family home, Set within well tended walled gardens
- Spacious five bedroom accommodation over three floors
- Impressive conservatory, three reception rooms, high quality fittings throughout
- Extensive breakfast kitchen, utility room and playroom
- EPC RATING C

'WOODBINE COTTAGE', 73 STOURBRIDGE ROAD, HAGLEY — £325,000
- Attractive double fronted end of terrace cottage
- Bedroom one with en-suite shower room, two further bedrooms
- Well maintained & improved double glazed accommodation
- Car parking to side of property with easily maintained rear garden
- EPC RATING D

REDUCED

28 JEWS LANE, UPPER GORNAL — £234,950
- Modern four bedroom detached house
- Well maintained & attractively presented
- Two reception rooms, utility area & re-fitted kitchen
- Ample off road parking & level easily maintained rear garden
- EPC RATING D

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7 BOUNDARY CRESCENT, LOWER GORNAL — £187,500
- Extended semi detached house
- Three bedrooms plus attic room
- Sun room, bar, utility area and sauna room
- Rear garden with decking on two levels
- EPC RATING D

NO UPWARD CHAIN

141 SEDGLEY ROAD, WOODSETTON — £177,500
- Modern three bedroom detached house
- Offers well presented accommodation
- Garage situated at the rear with additional parking
- Situated in a well established and popular residential area
- EPC RATING D

NO UPWARD CHAIN

8 HALL GROVE — £169,500
COSELEY
- Detached house
- Three bedrooms
- In need of some updating works
- Pleasant cul de sac location
- EPC RATING E

REDUCED

NO UPWARD CHAIN

15 BEECHFIELD GROVE, COSELEY — £155,000
- Traditional style semi detached house
- Well proportioned three bedroom accommodation
- Occupying a wide corner plot on the popular Bramford housing estate
- Some degree of cosmetic updating needed
- EPC RATING D

37 DALESWOOD PARK, ROMSLEY — £129,950
- New park home enviably positioned on a hard landscaped plot with ample patio areas
- Overlooking adjoining woodland within a semi rural locality
- Contemporary accommodation with open plan living room, dining/kitchen area
- Two bedrooms with built in wardrobes, shower room with large walk in shower
- Daleswood Park is a small park home site, designated for owner occupiers only

NO UPWARD CHAIN

93 WHITEGATES ROAD — £74,950
COSELEY
- Spacious first floor flat
- Three bedrooms
- Shared hall, stairs & landing
- Communal grounds
- EPC RATING C

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Chalmers Road, Baggeridge Village
£339,950

2 | 4 | 2 | EPC B

Stone Mill Walk, Upper Gornal
£279,000

1 | 4 | 2 | EPC B

Louise Street, Gornal Wood
OIRO £269,950

1 | 4 | 1 | EPC D

Penns Wood Close, Northway
£250,000

2 | 3 | 1 | EPC D

Himley Gardens, The Straits
£239,950

2 | 3 | 1 | EPC D

Cotwall End Road, The Straits
£219,950

2 | 2 | 2 | EPC C

Charles Hayward Drive, Wolverhampton
£199,995

1 | 3 | 2 | EPC B

Northway, Sedgley
OIEO £195,950

2 | 3 | 1 | EPC E

Robert Wynd, Woodcross
Auction Guide Price £135,000

1 | 3 | 1 | EPC D

Highland Road, Dudley
Auction Guide Price £95,000

2 | 3 | 1 | EPC F

Dudley Road, Sedgley
Auction Guide Price £80,000

2 | 2 | 1 | EPC E

Burton Road, Dudley
Auction Guide Price £80,000

3 | 3 | 1 | EPC E

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SKITTS ESTATE AGENTS

MOTORING

YOUR WEEKLY GUIDE TO THE BEST CARS ON THE MARKET

New 508 has all the ingredients to be a success

By Ryan Hirons

Peugeot has been on something of a push to move up the car market. It recently introduced a new corporate design to give a premium look, brought its innovative i-Cockpit tech into production and all while retaining the functionality the firm's machines are known for.

One piece has been missing from the premium puzzle, though — a genuinely appealing saloon offering, which is something the French firm hasn't really had for a couple of decades. Well, now one's here — introducing the Peugeot 508.

The 508 is now in its second generation, but this is effectively a rewrite of the saloon in order to make a real impact on the market.

First up is the new design — taking Peugeot's latest corporate look and placing it in perhaps its most complete form yet, with a sleek body and impactful, angular front fascia. The flagship-like look continues inside the car, with the firm's i-Cockpit the star of the show.

The sleek body allows the sharp fascia and LED headlights to make a striking impact on the overall design

Vision

There's also a ton of tech on-board, including night vision — a claimed first for the segment — allowing drivers to catch obstacles otherwise difficult to see when driving in pitch-black conditions.

We got behind the wheel of the Peugeot 508 in GT BlueHDi 180 EAT8 flavour, meaning it's powered by a 2.0-litre four-cylinder diesel engine paired up to an eight-speed automatic gearbox. The powertrain develops 177bhp and 400Nm of torque, capable of taking the saloon from 0-60mph in 8.1 seconds and up to a top speed of 146mph. As for efficiency, Peugeot claims it can achieve 60.1mpg on the combined cycle with CO2 emissions of 124g/km.

It's an engine that's extremely well suited to a cruise. Sitting on a motorway in Comfort mode, it's well-refined with little noise being fed into the cabin. It's potent enough for a bit more spirited driving, however, it begins to feel a tad gutless when strung out higher in the rev range.

The Peugeot 508 delivers a driving experience that matches the looks. It feels agile and capable of taking pretty much anything you'll throw at it when pushing it on a B-road.

Steering is very well-judged while the chassis itself appears finely tuned — an engine with more poke under the bonnet could very well create a serious performance machine. (Did someone say 508 GTI?).

Despite delivering on the hard-driving front, it manages to be a comfortable cruiser too. The suspension is supple and road noise is pretty limited in the cabin. Switch on the adaptive cruise control (albeit once you find the oddly-located switch) and you could easily chew up hundreds of miles without hassle. It is, however, a little let down with poor rear visibility which can make the 508 difficult in tighter spots but sensors all-around aid that.

Peugeot's current corporate design is one we're big fans of, and the 508 might just be the epitome of it.

The sleek body allows the sharp fascia and LED headlights to make a striking impact on the overall design, and the walrus-esque daytime running lights create something of a concept car effect.

We'd go as far to say this is the best-looking Peugeot of the decade.

If it was our money, we'd be going for the Ultimate Red paint finish. It stands out from a crowd of subdued greys and really makes the best of the sharp bodywork.

Step inside the Peugeot 508 and you'll find perhaps the best application of its aviation-style i-Cockpit technology to date — you almost get the sense the car was designed to fit around the interior, rather than vice versa.

The jet plane-like effect works seriously well here, with a low-down driving position creating a sense of being in a sports-focused machine — enhanced further by the compact steering wheel.

It's not all rosy, though. Premium-feel materials in the car aren't exactly bad to touch, but they're by no means the most convincing in the segment.

As for practicality, you're looking at 487 litres of boot space while seating five people — all of which can be comfortably in the car, even adults.

Prices for the Peugeot 508 start at £25,000, although our GT test car comes in at a seemingly hefty £36,400.

There's a good amount of equipment thrown in for that price, though. Assistance tech includes adaptive cruise control with lane keep assist, all-round parking sensors and blind spot detection.

Luxury kit is generous too, with electric seats that boast a massage function along with heating, dual-zone climate control, the i-Cockpit cabin and a 10-inch infotainment display with support for both Apple CarPlay and Android Auto.

On top of all that, there are full LED headlights with automatic high beams and 19-inch alloy wheels to build on that sporty appearance.

The Peugeot 508 is the best car the firm has produced in a long, long time. It's a genuinely desirable saloon — something the firm hasn't delivered in a long time — and one that deserves to sell well.

It manages to achieve that difficult blend of a good-looking car that's great to drive while also being even better suited for the everyday commute. It's not without its flaws, but none are earth-shattering and there's no reason to not buy the 508 in comparison with rivals.

Free servicing on Kia Stinger

A wide range of offers across line-up

Kia Motors (UK) Ltd is heading into summer with a wide range of offers available across its model line-up.

There isn't a better time than now to test drive a Kia hybrid model as the popular Hybrid Challenge will continue across Kia's 192-strong dealer network throughout Q3. Any customers who test drive the Niro Hybrid/Plug-in Hybrid, Optima Plug-in Hybrid or Optima Sportswagon Plug-in Hybrid, and go on to purchase one, will receive £1,000 off the price of their new car.

The Kia Scrappage Scheme continues into Q3 with a £2,000 scrappage bonus available on Picanto, Rio and the all-new Stonic to customers trading in their previous seven-year or older vehicle. The Kia Scrappage Scheme is available with 4.9 per cent APR finance but is in lieu of all other offers and on retail sales only.

All models benefit from 4.9 per cent APR finance, with generous deposit contribution levels on PCP contracts available for most models. All-new Stonic comes with a £1,500 contribution, Niro hybrid with a £500 contribution, and Kia's bestselling Sportage with up to £1,500 on its advanced diesel variants.

New for Q3 is a free servicing offer on the all-new Stinger, Kia's ground-breaking gran turismo. New owners of the Stinger diesel will benefit from the first three scheduled services free of charge and six on petrol powertrains including the 2.0 T-GDi 244bhp and 3.3 T-GDi 365bhp for maximum peace of mind.

Forget the heatwave, awards are raining on the new Fiesta

The all-new Ford Fiesta continues to be popular with both the buying public and the motoring media, as it celebrates another prestigious industry award.

Fiesta has won Auto Express magazine's Supermini of the Year award, capping off a highly-successful first half of 2018 for Britain's favourite car.

Steve Fowler, Auto Express editor-in-chief, said: "The Ford Fiesta's fantastic mix of affordability, practicality and infotainment is a big draw for buyers, and when combined with attractive PCP finance deals – how most people in this sector buy – it's a winner.

"Add in the car's dynamic ability and the Fiesta really cements its position as the king of the supermini class."

This latest win for Fiesta is its eighth this year, having already also been declared Car of the Year and Best Small Car by Carbuyer.co.uk – sister site to Auto Express.

More than 50,000 new Fiestas have found homes on British driveways this year, with buyers loving its value, comfort and ride, as well as over a dozen safety and driver assist technologies including automatically halting the car in the event of a pedestrian stepping into its path.

Andy Barratt, Ford of Britain chairman and managing director, said: "As best-selling car for over 10 years, us Brits have truly taken the Ford Fiesta to our hearts.

"The pressure was on to deliver a replacement which would continue Fiesta's reign – which Ford has done and Auto Express has recognised."

The new Fiesta ST just on sale promises to raise the bar for supermini hot hatches, with 200PS generated by its all-new, three-cylinder, 1.5-litre EcoBoost engine and handling to match thanks to three selectable Drive Modes.

The Fiesta Active offers a muscular new look, literally raising the Fiesta above the crowd. SUV-inspired styling includes roof rails, wider wheel arches, and distinctive 17" alloy wheels.

Whether a sports ST, Active crossover, luxury Vignale or other model in the new Fiesta range, all come with the highest five-star Euro NCAP rating thanks to its lane-keeping alert, seatbelt minder and speed limiter for when taken out by inexperienced drivers.

Stylish, luxury SUV that is a real pleasure to travel in

By Sharon Walters

In a market somewhat overwhelmed with choice, how do you choose which luxury SUV to buy?

Most people go for badge loyalty and stick to what they've known for years. And quite often that means they've become stuck in a rut, a nice rut but one that could well do with breaking out of because there's nothing like having a change.

Now to my suggestion for that change – the Lexus RX. It's been around for quite a few years and is in its fourth generation. But it's not that well-known on our roads. More than 234,000 RX have been sold in Europe and of that number 47,600 in the UK. Quite a small number in the luxury pool over the years.

My suggestion in particular is the 450h F Sport. It's smart, sexy and packed with loads of goodies.

Distinguished

The RX F Sport is distinguished from the rest of the range by a series of exterior elements with a matching black finish. This includes the signature Lexus spindle grille, featuring a sequence of horizontal bars, framed in chrome and flanked by fog lights set in new black surrounds.

20-inch alloy wheels have a five-twin-spoke design and are also painted black. The side profile has black housings for the heated, electrically adjustable door mirrors with integrated turn indicators and auto-folding function.

At the rear there's a black diffuser treatment for the lower part of the bumper.

In addition to the external features, the RX F Sport is equipped to a high level. LED headlight, smooth leather or high-quality fabric upholstery and a nine or 12 -speaker Pioneer premium audio system with, eight or 12.3-inch Lexus Media Display are all provided as standard.

The cabin is truely luxurious with very high quality trim, a pleasure to travel in.

On the safety side the Sport has the Lexus Safety System+ package of active safety and driver assistance features that includes pre-collision system, adaptive cruise control, lane departure warning, lane keep assist and traffic sign recognition.You also get many airbags, sway warning alert, ABS with electronic brakeforce distribution and brake assist, hill start and tyre pressure warning.

The full hybrid system means that whenever the vehicle is being driven the electricmotor is always operating.

The RX F Sport is distinguished from the rest of the range by exterior elements with a matching black finish

The side profile has black housings for the heated, electrically adjustable door mirrors

The petrol engine will stop and start at any vehicle speed depending on a variety of conditions to maintain the best possible balance between performance and efficiency.

Performance-wise the car will get from 0-62mph in 7.7 seconds, not bad for a vehicle of this size, and gas a top speed of 124mph.

Figures are all well and good but it's where the power lies in difficult situations. Let me say this car had plenty of oomph to negotiate motorway traffic and push through winding country roads. And the electric CVT transmission is smooth and responsive.

This 450 F Sport also has a top five-star rating from Euro NCAP.

My test car had a number of options including the Premier Pack (£4,500) with items such as panoramic sunroof (making the so light and airy inside), head-up display and panoramic view monitor

On-the-road price is £54,145.

New Santa Fe moving upmarket

Hyundai has announced prices for the fourth-generation of its popular Santa Fe SUV. The new car will start from £33,425, putting it in the firing line of rivals such as the SsangYong Rexton, Land Rover Discovery Sport and Kia Sorento.

The new Santa Fe gets a total exterior revamp from the previous model. Now, there's an eye-catching design language inherited from the compact Kona SUV, which sees a bold 'Cascading' grille flanked by the now-signature 'upside-down' headlamp design.

The Hyundai's seven-seat interior also receives a premium makeover, with improved material quality and extra head- and leg-room for passengers travelling in rows two and three.

In the UK, three trims will be available, though all share just one engine – a 2.2-litre diesel unit, that already features in the Kia Sorento and produces 197bhp. It's mated either to a 6-speed manual transmission or an eight-speed dual-clutch auto.

The range kicks off with SE trim, which is only available with front-wheel drive. It gets seven seats as standard, plus roof rails, a rear-view camera, all-round parking sensors, dual-zone climate control, cruise control, and an infotainment display with Apple CarPlay and Android Auto.

Stepping up to Premium grade sees the price rise to £36,995, but offers an impressive level of equipment including keyless entry, LED headlamps, leather seats, a KRELL sound system, built-in navigation and an electric tailgate. It's offered with manual or automatic transmissions and two or four-wheel drive, making the £38,995 Premium the cheapest 4WD Santa Fe available.

Finally, there's top-spec Premium SE, which costs from £41,795. It's offered only with the eight-speed automatic gearbox and is packed with premium kit including 19-inch alloy wheels, a panoramic glass roof, ventilated front seats, a head-up display, 360-degree cameras and sensors.

Safety equipment is a big focus, and all Santa Fe models feature lane keeping assist, high beam assist and autonomous emergency braking. All automatic variants also get speed-variable cruise control. Premium grade and above also receives blind-spot detection and rear occupancy alert, designed to prevent drivers from leaving children or pets in the vehicle by mistake.

The new Santa Fe gets a total exterior revamp from the previous model

The brand has also announced pricing for the new Kona diesel. Previously the car was only available with 1.0-litre or 1.6-litre petrol engines, the new 1.6-litre diesel Kona costs from £19,750 and is available in 113bhp or 134bhp power outputs.

Now 'a real car' company

American electric vehicle manufacturer Tesla has finally reached production targets for its first mass-market car – the Model 3.

The brand has missed ambitious targets in the past but last week produced a total of 5,031 Model 3s – finally reaching its goal of 5,000 units per week by the end of the second quarter of 2018. That target was initially set for December 2017 but was pushed back twice – to the end of 2018's first quarter and then its second quarter.

"I think we just became a real car company," said chief executive and founder Elon Musk in a leaked memo to staff. "Transporting entire production lines across the world in massive cargo planes. Whatever. It worked."

The brand's tactics have met with some criticism, though. To meet targets, Tesla set up an assembly line in a rigid tent in one of the car parks of its California factory – a move some see as a quick and unsustainable fix to the problem.

"A new building was impossible, so we built a giant tent in two weeks," tweeted Musk at the time.

Musk's tweets also included photographs of parts and equipment lined up ready for fitting, such as a huge room full of drivers' seats or electric motors. Though the images look encouraging, commenters said this method was far from efficient – pointing Musk towards the 'just-in-time' system employed by most major car manufacturers, which sees parts delivered to the factory just hours before they're due to be fitted to a car.

Britannia Motors

58 **JAGUAR X TYPE 2.2SE** Diesel Automatic Blue, Full Cream Leather, Alloys Sat Nav, Air Conditioning £4299

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06 **HONDA CIVIC 1.8 SE i-VTEC** Met Black, 5 Door, Full Leather Trim, Electric Windows, Power Steering Alloy Wheels £2699

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08 **FORD FOCUS 1.8 TITANIUM DIESEL** 5 Door, Met Grey, Alloy Wheels, Air Conditioning, Power Steering, Electric Windows £2999

08 **VAUXHALL ZAFIRA 1.9 CDTi** Bronze, 7 Seats, Met Grey, Power Steering, Electric Windows, Air Conditioning, CD Player £2999

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Dudley Chronicle Thursday, July 12, 2018

Practical with surprising dose of style

By Ryan Hirons

The van-turned-MPV has been a mainstay in the market for a number of years now – if one that has been dwindling for a while.

The PSA Group – consisting of Peugeot, Citroen and now Opel/Vauxhall – has been right at the forefront of this particular game for some time with the big-selling Peugeot Partner Teepee and Citroen Berlingo twins, and it's not giving up the ghost just yet. A new wave of these machines is on the horizon, and this is the first – the Peugeot Rifter.

With the ever-growing presence of SUVs though, does buying a van-based MPV still make sense in 2018?

Although the concept of a van-MPV is nothing new, the Rifter itself is a pretty fresh machine. In fact, it's a new name – replacing the old Partner Tepee in the range and distancing itself from the Partner van it's based on.

It's got a new look as well – taking on Peugeot's most recent corporate design. Inside the cabin, the firm's stylish i-Cockpit cabin also makes an appearance.

As for engine options, there's a choice of powertrains plucked from the rest of PSA's range – namely PureTech 110 and 130 petrol engines, along with BlueHDi diesels in 75, 100 and 130 guises.

We took the helm of a Rifter powered by the BlueHDi 130 unit – a 1.5-litre engine delivering 128bhp and 221Nm of torque, here paired up to an eight-speed automatic gearbox. No official word on 0-60mph times.

As for efficiency, Peugeot claims 65.7mpg is possible on the combined cycle with CO2 emissions of 114g/km.

Don't expect it to be the last word in performance, but the diesel engine provides ample power to cart around the Rifter without ever feeling asthmatic. Gear changes from the automatic 'box also feel seamless and, despite the van roots, there's little noise from the engine itself – allowing for a relaxing ride.

There's a 775-litre load capacity

The Peugeot Rifter was never destined to be a serious driver's car, but the experience behind the wheel is a little less than stellar – its van roots shine through all too well.

Steering falls on the light side yet the Rifter requires a ton of input at low speed to navigate around relatively tight turns, while at higher speeds body roll is incredibly present – perhaps to be expected for such a tall machine.

Style isn't the name of the game in this market segment, but the Rifter is a pretty good-looking thing in its own right. The introduction of Peugeot's corporate style pays off here – with the angular language sitting well on the van dimensions.

Compared with SUVs – even those from Peugeot – it's not a fashion icon but does manage to pack genuine practicality into a good-looking package.

Style isn't the name of the game in this market segment, but the Rifter is a pretty good-looking thing in its own right

Step into the driver's seat and you'll be greeted by the firm's i-Cockpit cabin which is slowly but surely taking over its entire range. It brings a high-positioned instrument cluster, eight-inch touchscreen infotainment system (on Allure and higher models) along with a compact, race car-esque steering wheel to create an encapsulated feel.

Looking for pure practicality? We're glad to report the Rifter offers tons of that. The three rear seats all feature Isofix mounting points meaning all the kids can come along for the ride in child seats, while a 775-litre load capacity with all seats in place means you can fit more than enough for a family week away in the back with ease. Still not enough? A seven-seat version will be landing in the UK in 2019.

Pricing for the full range has yet to be confirmed, but the GT-Line BlueHDi 130 as tested will be available from £24,220. For the money, equipment on offer includes keyless start, automatic dual-zone climate control, satellite navigation and tons of gloss black exterior highlights to bring a stylish edge – on top of LED daytime running lights, an eight-inch infotainment system with Apple CarPlay and Android Auto support amongst others.

The Rifter manages to bring a hint of style to a segment often not associated with it, while retaining the practicality and daily usability MPV buyers will be hoping to expect – and although it may struggle to hide its roots as a van, we can forgive that.

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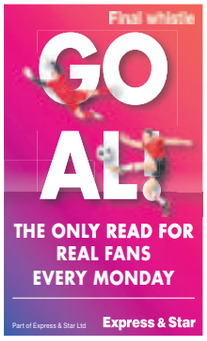

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Future looking bright for Beacon League

THE future for one local football league looks bright after it announced an increase in club membership for the forthcoming campaign, writes Dave McLean.

Not only have the Beacon Sunday Football League (BSFL) accepted five new teams so far – it is still not too late to join the ranks – the afternoon set-up have confirmed the introduction of a new match-day initiative.

From the start of the new league season on September 2, member clubs have adopted the use of roll-on/roll-off substitutions for all competitions. Under the new rule, teams will be allowed to name five substitutes and use them at anytime in a game.

In another new move the BSFL will kick off the season with two separate sections. Two titles will be up for grabs, firstly in the established Beacon Championship, the other in a new Development division, ideal for newly-formed teams and those just entering 'open age' football. It is also hoped to introduce a new over-30s Seniors section.

Trampolining event is set to tumble in

THE 2018 Trampoline, Tumbling & DMT British Championships springs into action at Arena Birmingham in September. This year the gymnasts gained 13 major medals in the recent European Championships.

Spectators could witness the return of history-making trampoline Olympic Silver Medallist Bryony Page on home soil, as she takes on stiff competition from world team bronze medallists Laura Gallagher and Kat Driscoll.

Nathan Bailey and Luke Strong will go head to head for the men's senior trampoline crown during the event on September 22 and 23. The senior tumbling teams led by 2018 European champion Lucie Colebeck, and her teammates Yasmin Taite, Kristof Willerton, Greg Townley and Elliott Browne will show off their power and skill.

DMT gymnasts will bring their explosive power and high-flying stunts in a bid for the British titles. The newly-crowned Junior European team champions and individual senior gold medallist Kirsty Way will be looking to edge out the competition.

Memorial match for ex-academy coach JP

FORMER Wolves academy coach John Perkins is to be honoured with a special memorial game tomorrow (Friday).

Perkins (aka JP) worked at Molineux from 2000-2009 as assistant academy manager and under-18s coach and was in charge when Wolves' talented youngsters reached the semi-finals of the FA Youth Cup in 2005.

Wolves U23s will play at Hinckley's Leicester Road FC (who play in the Midland Football League), kick off 7.30pm for The John Perkins Memorial Trophy. The match has been organised by Leicester Road FC manager Neil Lyne, who as a young semi-pro player with Leicester United also signed for Nottingham Forest with John Perkins in 1989 (when Brian Clough first recognised JP's unique coaching talents) and remained a very close friend.

JP died in October 2016, aged 69, following a short illness and at the time was senior academy coach at (then) Premiership Stoke City FC.

Wolves sporting director Kevin Thelwell explains: "John was a huge part of the development plan we had here at Wolves."

Sandwell against Walsall in one of the many football matches

A gymnast shows off her skill in the opening ceremony

Game on as 1,000 pupils enjoy sporting festival

IT was game on as more than 1,000 youngsters went to to a Black Country sports day. The competition was fierce as more than 80 schools from across the region went head-to-head.

The seventh annual Black Country School Games Summer Festival was held at the University of Wolverhampton's Walsall campus.

Teams of young athletes from Wolverhampton, Dudley, Sandwell and Walsall battled it out in a bid to be crowned the Black Country champions and win the Joel Richards Black Country Schools Games Festival Cup.

Ian Carey, director of Active Black Country who organised the event, said: "School Games is an annual festival where we seek to bring all schools across the region together in a celebration of activity, participation and competition.

"We have got over 250 young volunteers gaining brilliant experience and skills that will stand them in good stead in terms of school but also in their future life.

Introduce

"The young people they drive the menu of sport themselves – it is led by them. I think the children are our future and unfortunately the region suffers from some of the highest levels of childhood obesity. I think this is a great way to bring children together and introduce them to activity.

"It is a great way to introduce them to sport and physical activity on a level playing field that tries to meet the needs of all young people.

"We are just aiming for people to be able to play sport and be physically active. I believe it is a human right that people should have to play sport or be physically active."

Young people took part in a range of activities – including sports hall athletics, multi skills, rounders, rugby, cricket, dodgeball, tri-golf, multi skills, football and duathlon.

One of those taking part, Tia Maisur, aged eight, from Lanesfield Primary School in Wolverhampton, said: "We have been doing golf and we had to get the balls in the hole. It is my first time at the festival. I think it is really good."

SPORTING FEATURE

Report by Luke Bartlett

"It's a great way to introduce them to sport and physical activity on a level playing field that tries to meet the needs of all young people"

Another, Jack Bickley, aged seven, from Abbey Infant School in Smethwick, said: "It was really good because we got to do a lot of activities and try different sports out."

For Andrew Marlowe, physical education teacher at The Jane Lane School in Walsall, bringing his team of boys to take their chances at going for gold in the football was 'second to none'.

He said: "You have to qualify for The Black Country Games so it is quite prestigious. Just to get here all of the schools have done well.

"We have been a few times. We are lucky enough that we have a got a good batch of lads every key stage and every year we do qualify for it, but it is important for them to come here, to meet new people and new schools.

"It is a confidence thing as well, we all want to win but just for them to take part and see the smiles on their faces is second to none."

It was a good showing for Sandwell at the games – who among other notable victories saw Bristnall Hall take the first place for football and Uplands Manor take the first place for golf.

But the overall award went back into the hands of the Wolverhampton students for the second year running – who won the multi skills category with St Andrews and rounders with Wolverhampton Girls High.

They won the Joel Richards Black Country Schools Games Festival Cup – which was renamed two years ago to honour the former Wood Green Academy pupil after he lost his life in the Tunisia terror attack of 2015. Remembering the teenager is something that his former headteacher James Topham says is something the school wanted to do.

Mr Topham said: "Joel was a volunteer, he helped out at these games, he did thousands and thousands of hours of volunteering for sports, he was a real ambassador for sport.

"He absolutely loved this event. The tragic circumstances in Tunisia where he lost his life, as a school because Joel was a former pupil of Wood Green Academy, we wanted to do something to remember him.

"At that time I was chair of the local organising committee and as Joel had done so much for the Black Country in terms of sport, we wanted to be able to remember him.

"We decided on the Joel Richards Trophy, which we never had before, and also having Smile For Joel as the official charity of the games.

"I'm really pleased they are taking this charity on board. Joel was selfless, he would actively go out of his way to help people, not just in the games but as a football referee.

"Had he not lost his life in that terrorist attack, no doubt he would still be giving back to his community. We have lost that, and I hope that having him remembered and his life inspires other young people to get involved."

Well protected for the fencing challenge

Head over heels as pupils get sporting chance

Page 39

It's no half measures for DK runners

IT was a tale of the trails at the weekend for runners from Dudley Kingswinford Running Club with opportunities to race over the half marathon distance of 13.1 miles over two tough courses and take in some stunning scenery. Despite that only a handful took the opportunity to pull on the blue hoops possibly put off by the swelteringly hot weather and the difficulties of the two courses.

The weekend kicked off with the Eastridge Trail Half Marathon. Set in the Shropshire countryside the course covered an undulating route over trails and tracks around Eastridge woods and up to the Stiperstones Ridge. With 2,324 feet of ascent this is certainly one that could leave runners on their hands and knees at some point during the race.

Steve Holdcroft was the only representative from DK on the day coming home in an impressive 91.15, some way behind the winner Jez Brown of Buckley RC, who claimed victory in 87.42 but a similar distance of the third place finisher, Stuart Smith of Shropshire Shufflers in 94.47.

Twenty four hours later runners were presented with a similar option in the Wyre Forest Half Marathon, again a tough, undulating race over fire tracks and trails through the forest culminating with a nightmare of an uphill finish. Helen Tromans was first back for the hoops taking 27th place overall, sixth lady and claiming first in her age group in 1.44.46 and Carol Fisher completed the trio of weekend racers coming home in 88th place in 2.07.10.

Himley hammer depleted Kidder thanks to veteran

HIMLEY took advantage of a depleted Kidderminster side with a 10-wicket success in the Birmingham League Division One. The leaders collapsed to 78 all out as veteran seam bowler Chris Boroughs claimed 8-28. A brisk unbeaten 64 from Oliver Westbury eased them home.

Brockhampton defeated Halesowen by 95 runs. Ian Bullock (55) and Joe Crichard (52) and 42 from Tom Cummins took the Herefordshire side to 276-9, in 55 overs, despite an impressive spell from Charlie Hartley (4-52). Alexei Kervezee (73) and Kester Moseley (52) threatened a recovery but Hales lost their last six wickets for eight runs after they had reached 173-4. Adam Hewlett took the last three wickets at a cost of 51.

Stourbridge appear to be cruising towards the Division Three title after they hammered Old Elizabethans by 172 runs. They piled up 329-5 at Amblecote with opening batsman Jujhar Johal scoring 91. Nathan Crudeli came to the crease at 144-3 and proceeded to smash an undefeated 121 from 74 balls, including 16 boundaries and three sixes. OEs were dismissed for 157 with Crudeli picking up 4-21.

Golfer embarks on PGA EuroPro Tour

Golfer Jack South

GOLFER Jack South is being sponsored by Oldbury-based recruitment agency, Osprey Engineering Solutions, as he undertakes the PGA EuroPro Tour across the UK.

The company based at Trigate Business Centre in Oldbury, will sponsor South, of Quinton, for the remainder of the Tour, including an upcoming event at Longhirst Hall Golf Club in Northumberland.

Matthew Reilly, managing director of Osprey explains: "I have personally known Jack for a number of years, and have been proud to watch him advance in his golfing career.

"Since advertising our partnership, I have already received enquiries and new business from people who have been interested in the golf connection.

"I'm really looking forward to seeing how this partnership develops and cheering Jack on for the remainder of the tour."

As well as playing several events in the PGA EuroPro Tour, South also plans to play in the Midlands-based Jamega Pro Golf Tour and qualifying stages for the European Tour. With the EuroPro Tour shown on television, Osprey's logo will be seen by a potential audience of one million. Jack is also sponsored by Taymar Homes, based in Netherton.

SEN CROWNED CRUISER KING

MATT Sen claimed the British Cruiserweight title in only his fourth professional fight on Saturday evening.

The 30-year-old former bodybuilder, who made his professional just debut 12 months ago, came back from the brink to defeat Wolverhampton's Josh Burke in dramatic style in the top-of-the-bill bout at The Venue, Dudley, at BCB Promotions' 'Usual Suspects' show.

After a cagey opener, Burke found his rhythm. Working off a strong jab, it seemed the 32-year-old couldn't miss with his right hand catching Sen with a number of well-timed shots. He continued to box with confidence in the third and there appeared to only be one winner.

Champion Matt Sen

However, that all changed in a split second. Midway through the fourth, Burke stalked Sen with his guard lowered. Sen hit back with peach of a right to the chops which dazed Burke and, after an onslaught of clubbing right hands, referee Kevin Parker waved off the contest.

Unbeaten

Sen had just enough energy to raise his hands in victory as he had dug deep to claim the win, the belt, and maintain his unbeaten start to life as a professional boxer.

Kirstie Bavington bounced back from a draw on her debut to claim a close 39-38 victory over Irish debutant, Elaine Greenan. Fellow Richie Ghent trained fighters Josh Miller, Connor Lee Jones and Danny Ball all claimed points victories over Lewis Van Poetsch, Kristian Laight and Danny Little respectively. Daryl Pearce made a winning start in the paid ranks as he overcame Plymouth's Mohamed Mahmoud 39-37.

Reaching cup finals is a stroll

Dudley-based Hartshill Strollers Over 65s team beat Birmingham 3-1 to reach the national final

HARTSHILL Strollers Club have won through to the regional finals of a major walking football trophy – twice.

The Dudley club's Over 65s team beat Birmingham WFC 3-1 in the Walking Football Association National Cup 2018 – just nine days after their Over 60s won 1-0, also against Birmingham. Both regional finals will be held in August. Their opponents have yet to be decided. The winners will go through to the Grand Finals in September.

The WFA National Cup is walking football's most prestigious tournament. Hartshill's Over 60s won the trophy in 2016.

This year they overcame Birmingham with a goal by midfielder Steve Nicholls. The super-veterans won with two goals from striker Richard Delahaye and one from Graham Crew.

Family fun in the sun at tennis club

AS Wimbledon Lawn Tennis Club opened its doors to the top players, Wollaston Tennis Club members competed for their annual Jubilee Trophy.

With temperatures warmer than Majorca, nine couples competed in a mixed handicap tournament to try to get their name on the club's coveted silver salver.

This year's tournament saw several husbands and wives entering as well as club treasurer Mike White and his daughter Emily. This all added to the occasion together with the flags flying as everyone supported England in the World Cup too!

Matches took place over a three hour period in sweltering temperatures and were competitive, fun and played in great spirit.

The final was between club chairman Alan Hughes and first time finalist Claire Ashman against Chris Brown and Sarah Needs. In a tense match Chris and Sarah came out on top meaning that the trophy was won by two members who weren't actually born when the first event took place.

Tournament organiser John Cutler said "It was great to see so many members taking part on such a hot afternoon. This annual tournament has run since 1977 and is always well supported."

Wollaston has four men's teams and three ladies' teams which play in both Hereford and Worcester and Staffordshire leagues.

For more details see www.wollastontennis.co.uk website.

Running club look for new recruits

A BLACK COUNTRY running club which boasts more than 100 members is on the lookout for new people to join.

Stourbridge Running Club was founded more than 30 years ago and its members take part in events from long distance running to triathlons and ultra-marathons. Bob Hopkins, secretary, said: "We are always on the lookout for new members, particularly younger people. We have members from their teens up to pensioners."

The runners meet on Monday, Wednesday based at Stourbridge Cricket Club in Amblecote. See www.srclub.co.uk website.

★★★

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